

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Carolyn C. Carlisle

Bachelor of Science, Troy State University, 2008
M.Div., Interdenominational Theological Center, 2011

Mentor
Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D.

A FINAL DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Dayton, Ohio
May, 2015

**UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DAYTON, OHIO**

**FACULTY APPROVAL PAGE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY FINAL PROJECT**

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME

ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND

ROLE OF THE CHURCH

by

Carolyn C. Carlisle

United Theological Seminary, 2014

Faculty Mentor

Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D.

Date: _____

Approved:

Faculty Mentor(s):

Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS	8
2. THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT.....	27
3. FOUNDATIONS	42
4. METHODOLOGY	76
5. FIELD EXPERIENCE	80
6. REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	95
APPENDIX	
A. DEFINITIONS	102
B. PRE-TEST AND POST- TEST CONTINUUM.....	104
C. SESSIONS FORMAT	106
D. SESSION EVALUATION	113
E. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	115
F. POSTCARD.....	117

G. CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT	119
H. RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	121
BIBLIOGRAPHY	124

ABSTRACT

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

by

Carolyn C. Carlisle

United Theological Seminary, 2015

Mentor

Sharon Ellis Davis, Ph.D.

Offering space in the local church and creating environments conducive for articulating narratives of after-effects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence survival was the objective of this Model in Ministry. Through qualitative methods (focus groups, observations and surveys), the project's aim was helping survivors employ practices that begin the healing process of guilt and shame. Survivors agreed that communicating personal testimonies in this setting improved participants' self-esteem and aided in personal healing. The study revealed that offering space and resources in the local church to survivors of domestic violence contributes greatly to improved self-esteem and promotes personal transformation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I give God thanks and praise for choosing and using me to help myself and others through the after effects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence. Thank you for trusting me with this work and ministry.

I have never been more pleased with the enthusiastic support, passion, editing and encouragement received from Dr. Adrian C. Evans, as she served as a source of inspiration and kept me on track in completing this vital work. One could not ask for a more supportive and encouraging team of professional and context associates: Dr. Janice Blackmon-Smith, Dr. Lavonia McIntyre, Dr. Vanessee J. Burns, Markerra Larkin, Dr. Mildred Watson, Anderson T. Graves, Leslie Hughes and Sharon Hughes. Thank you for your collaboration, your source of encouragement and support on this project.

Special thanks are also extended to the group of women survivors of domestic violence who entrusted me with their stories and realized the power of storytelling as it relates to healing. Thank you for your voice and for collectively affirming that “There is no healing in silence.” I believe in you.

I would like to thank Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis for her dedication and clear guidance as a mentor. Thank you for being who you are: dedicated and purpose driven. Your support, while stimulating, critical, and, at times, challenging was also affirming.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my two delightful children: Jason Marquis' Carlisle, age thirty-one, and Jasmine Jacari' Carlisle, age twenty. At the age of twelve, Jason spoke words that shocked me about my abuse, yet led me to seek help for the guilt and shame I was experiencing. As Jasmine matured in age, she always encouraged me to “speak out” against domestic violence. Both of my children were contributors to my emergence out of silence.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Pre-Test Continuum Results	85
Table 2. Post-Test Continuum Results	94

INTRODUCTION

Recently, a series of public service announcements have aired with celebrities and professional football players articulating their commitment to advocating against domestic violence. In these announcements, they have expressed that they will no longer accept excuses for domestic violence, while simultaneously no longer provide excuses for not getting involved. These recent public service announcements resonated in my inner being, immediately prompting my thought, “If only pastors would also make a commitment to addressing domestic violence in the local church and provide support ministries for survivors of domestic violence, the impact would be profound.” As a pastor, I joined the celebrities and professional football players in their denouncing of domestic violence and vowed to bring awareness into the church.

Domestic violence is an epidemic worldwide and affects persons of all genders, ethnicities, cultures, and economic statuses in every church denomination. And yet, many of our pastors are silent on the issue. “Churches should be talking about abuse because statistically some of our men are abusing women,”¹ and it is time for pastors to finally shatter the silence on domestic violence. “The community of faith must deal with domestic violence because it has penetrated our families, our neighborhoods, our

¹ Ron Clark, *Setting the Captives Free: a Christian Theology for Domestic Violence* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005), xx.

community, our churches and our world.”² It is the church’s duty to confront the issue, showing love and compassion for those who are being abused, while simultaneously holding perpetrators accountable. Consequently, the church is called to address all immorality and evil not just selective issues. “Domestic violence is not only a crime against humanity; it is a sin against God... Yet a greater crime exists. It is the crime of apathy and silence.”³ There is urgency in pastors establishing ministries within the local church to address domestic violence and create ways to help survivors of domestic violence because God does not condone domestic violence. Yet, when women leave an abusive relationship, the church is usually not the place where help is readily available. Pastors must act now!

One of the most crucial times for survivors of domestic violence is when they leave an abusive relationship. Women survivors of domestic violence often leave abusive relationships bruised, emotionally scarred and overwhelmed with guilt and shame. Rarely are there support ministries within the local church to address the aftereffects of guilt and shame, the foci of this project. Yet, in the Digital Video Disc, *Speaking of Faith: Domestic Violence Programs and the African American Church*, church leaders show how domestic violence ministries can and should be incorporated in church. This project purports that the role of the church is to provide support ministry for domestic violence survivors. “A Christian community is therefore a healing community, not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated, but because wounds and pains become

² Clark, xxi.

³ Ibid., xxi.

openings or occasions for a new vision.”⁴ The new vision is for churches to actively take the lead in developing ministries within the church to support women survivors of domestic violence. Although a few churches have embraced this new vision, other churches must act now!

As a survivor of domestic violence, in Chapter One, I share how my own experiences have driven urgency for the need of churches to address the aftereffects of guilt and shame. I understand that left unaddressed, guilt and shame will have a detrimental effect on survivors of domestic violence. I share my experience of being abused while still assembling weekly in a church that was silent on the issue of domestic violence. Sermons, literature, or the mention of domestic violence was not a part of my faith community. Thus, my healing did not come from a caring church community but occurred in peer focus group settings where I was able to dialog and share my story with other survivors of domestic violence. Consequently, I believe that the church is an appropriate place where ministries for survivors of domestic violence desperately need to be birthed. The model takes as its point of departure, storytelling as a means of dialoging, reframing, and reshaping lives for survivors of domestic violence.

Chapter Two investigates how offering space for female domestic violence survivors to meet in peer focus group settings and share their stories about the aftereffects of guilt and shame contributes positively to better self-esteem and aids in initiating healing. Working with women in the local church setting, the ministry project will reveal how the church can serve as an important role in shattering the silence on domestic violence and could be a place for addressing the aftereffects of guilt and shame associated

⁴ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Books, 1979), 100.

with surviving domestic violence. This chapter will show that the failure to address these issues of guilt and shame for survivors of domestic violence is an injustice. Social justice is supposed to be the main focus of the church. The church must regain its focus of being a place for providing liberation. Most importantly, research shows that healing of guilt and shame cannot be accomplished in isolation.

Chapter Three provides the biblical, historical and theological foundations for this work. Scripture from the Old Testament will be analyzed to show the aftereffects of guilt and shame experienced by a female domestic violence survivor, the effects that domestic violence has on the family, and what happens to the abused when the faith community fails to validate a victim's worth and thus silence her voice. Scripture from the New Testament will be analyzed to show that our ministry focus must be on enacting liberation. Historically, domestic violence can be traced backed to biblical times where women were seen as the property of a man. Research will show how patriarchy contributed to men exhibiting power and control over women, which also are dominant factors in domestic violence. We will look through the lenses of liberation, feminist and womanist theologies as tools for liberating women survivors of domestic violence. Liberation theology teaches about empowering from oppression. The failure of addressing the aftereffects of guilt and shame is an injustice; therefore, we must correct it and do justice. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a feminist, will show the equality of the sexes; therefore, women are made equal to men and thus have the same power. Womanist theology through the voices of Jacquelyn Grant, Delores Williams, and Alice Walker will speak to the experience of African American Women and call for specific ways of enacting healing. While we have acknowledged that domestic violence and its aftereffects

of guilt and shame know no boundary lines when it comes to factors such as ethnicity or culture, our focus for this project is African American women.

Chapter Four provides the hypothesis and model for this project. Survivors of domestic violence can be supported in the local church and resourced for conquering the emotions of guilt and shame. As a solution, a design model for creating space, in the local church, conducive to sharing the aftereffects of guilt and shame was accomplished. The design was built to include surveys, observations, and focus groups. Measurement occurred through pre and posttest continuum, depicting the degree of guilt and shame exhibited at the onset of the focus group versus the degree of guilt and shame by participants after having gone through six sessions. I chose this model because I believe that pastors and church leaders must address the issues that are relevant to the people they serve. I believe, just as Dr. Edward Smith Davis believes when he posits that “in order to serve people, we must hear them.”⁵ The goal of the model was to hear the voices of women who survived domestic violence yet still harbored feelings of guilt and shame, for members of the peer focus group to have named guilt and shame as one of the aftereffects of domestic violence, work through sharing their stories to embark upon the beginning of healing of those emotions, and gain a boost in their self-esteem while peeling off layers of guilt and shame.

Chapter Five provides the field experience developed through collaborative effort of Context and Professional Associates. Five African American women survivors of domestic violence shared through storytelling their stories of surviving domestic violence

⁵ Edward Smith Davis, “Ethical and Biblical Engagement for Social and Moral Imperatives: The Trials and Joys, the Ins and Outs of Being A Conference Minister with its Diversity” (lecture, Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ Headquarters, Burlington, NC, December 9, 2014).

and aftereffects of living with guilt and shame as they journeyed through six sessions of group. A focus was provided for each of the six sessions. Session One's focus was introduction of the project and model; Session Two's focus was defining and working through the aftereffects of guilt; Session Three's focus was defining and working through the aftereffects of shame; Session Four's focus was sharing of stories; Session Five's focus was self-esteem and Session Six's focus was celebration. During the field experience, guilt was released and shame lessened. Secrets were exposed as women articulated for the first time some of their experiences and how it affected them. Women who previously were unable to look at pictures or view themselves in the mirror because of feeling ugly, flawed, and unimportant were able to complete two mirror exercises and repeat their own positive affirmations to themselves. Women participated in a releasing ritual whereby they were able to write all the negative, blameful accusations experienced that they wanted to release on strips of paper, gather outside and burn.

Chapter Six covers a summary and reflects on the importance of the church pastors taking the lead in providing support services in their churches for parishioners who are experiencing the aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence. If healing is to be initiated and survivors transformed from victims to survivors to conquerors, then women must be validated and their voices must be heard – in the local church. The project was a success but there were some lesson learned. The consistency of conducting the group went well. Women survivors who were ready to do the work necessary for healing participated during the duration of the project. Those women were able to articulate through voice their cries that had been silenced for so long. Guilt and shame were named as an aftereffect by all survivors of domestic violence.

Sadly, two of the participants did not complete the entire six sessions and the Mary Kay Consultant did not honor her commitment in providing facials to the participants. I suggest in Chapter Six some alternative ways of fine-tuning the model.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Before formed in the womb of my mother, I was destined and ordained to proclaim the good news of the Gospel. Raised primarily by my maternal grandparents, church attendance was a vital part of living and God was the foundation of our family. Nonetheless, I would have to come to a personal knowledge of who God was in my own life...my path was paved.

Outgoing, vivacious, popular, and jovial described me during my teenage years. Yet none of these positive attributes could protect me from the disheartening life experiences that I would encounter; experiences stained with rejection, abandonment, guilt and shame. During my junior year of high school, at the age of sixteen, my first love ended our relationship of three years. Certain that he was my soul mate; I spent my next three years attempting to re-unite with him while simultaneously dating other men. The reunion never came to fruition, leaving me with feelings of rejection and abandonment. I continued to date casually, but for the next four years, I never fully committed to anyone.

Then it happened. I met someone that I was serious about; we fell in love and soon after, began making preparations for cohabitation. These plans were quickly dashed however by his grandmother who has raised him and still even into his adulthood, had great influence over his decisions. She rejected our idea to cohabitate, contending that if he was good enough to live with, then surely he was good enough to marry.

Consequently, we married which was a decision that would have devastating consequences for me. In hindsight, there were warning signs that registered on my red flag meter but I was in love. From an early age, I knew that I had the gift of discernment, but this time being in what I considered love clouded my usual crystal clear judgment. Additionally, my past feelings of rejection and abandonment, coupled with my determination to make this relationship work, meant that I went forth with the marriage and thus married a man who was a past felon, substance abuser of alcohol and drugs, and a perpetrator of domestic violence. He was a man who had never dealt with the abandonment of his real father; and the pain and damage of this void would severely impact his life's course and interactions with others.

The first occurrence of abuse happened in the seventh month of our marriage when I questioned him about the amount of time he was spending downstairs with a woman, who was a single mother and her children. In response, he came toward me with a knife. Survival instincts surfaced and I immediately ran out of the house and into the parking lot of the apartment complex. One of my male friends saw me and tried to help me escape by opening the passenger side of his car. However, my escape did not materialize. In fact, my husband pulled me from the car and roughly escorted me back to the apartment. Verbal and physical abuse continued that night. The vicious cycle of abuse would continue long afterward; open-handed slaps, closed-handed punches, kicks, threats of violence and futuristic threats of violence were merely just some of the violence that I endured. A year later I birthed my son, and though hopeful that the abuse would subside, it continued on.

During the two year duration of this abuse, I still attended church weekly for Bible Study and Sunday Worship. I wore a façade and attended services, pretending that everything was fine. Life was miserable but attending church and working was my only releases. Sadly, there were other women within our church who were also experiencing domestic violence and suffering in their own silence. We all assembled weekly, singing and praying about a loving God, but no one wanted to address the elephant in the sanctuary. Rod Buxton explained the phenomenon most accurately when stating, “The church is a place to be involved with loving, caring, and functional people. The problem is that these people are often found to be so ‘functional’ they will not even talk about domestic violence, let alone actually admit that they could be experiencing abuse from a spouse.”¹

I, along with other women, suffered silently in church. Though I was a functional member of the church, teaching Women’s Sunday school class, serving as President of the Matron’s Society, an Usher and Youth Director, I contributed to the elephant in the church by remaining silent and refusing to acknowledge my abuse. Marla F. Frederick’s work on southern black women and their everyday struggles of faith speaks volumes of my situation in her simple title, *Between Sundays*. “In spite of the problems within the church, women not only remain members they worship, participate, teach Sunday school, usher on the ushers’ board, give their tithe, form community outreaches, and in a large sense undergird the entire operation of the church.”² states Frederick. My abuse rarely

¹Rod Buxton, “Domestic violence in the church: “there is an elephant in the sanctuary and no-one is talking about it.” the results of a Manitoba survey.” *Didaskalia (Otterburne, Man.)* 12, no. 1:51-75. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 2, 2014), 53.

² Marla F. Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003). 4.

occurred on Sundays but it was between Sundays that my life was a living hell. In *Between Sundays*, Frederick speaks to my past predicament where she writes, “On Sundays we, as Christian believers, go to church, and we find grace that heals the broken places, hope to enter the coming week, and strength to meet its challenges. Sunday is where we make sense of it all. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday all come together on Sunday.”³ She described my experience precisely - Sundays somehow gave me hope that there could be better possibilities for the remainder of the week.

Hope can come in various ways. Frederick states, “Whether from the preaching of the word, the inspiration of the choir, or the testimony of the saints, on Sunday opportunities are found and answers are discovered.”⁴ Music has always been a vital part of my being; so much of my inspiration came from the choir, and music was where I found my hope. I carried with me the lyrics to a song the choir sang, entitled “There’s a brighter day ahead.” Ringing in my ears were these lyrics, “there’s a brighter day ahead for Jesus has said, and if you trust in Him, He said, there’ll be a brighter day ahead.” These words gave me hope. I applied the lyrics of this song to my abusive situation and believed that one day things would improve.

Unfortunately, my hopeful inspiration certainly did not come from the preaching of the Word on domestic violence because I never once heard a sermon preached on the subject. There were no workshops hosted or domestic violence pamphlets in the foyer or women’s restroom at the church I was attending. Al Miles, in *Domestic Violence: What*

³ Frederick, 210.

⁴ Ibid., 210.

Every Pastor Needs to Know, documents that “Clergy people have often not been helpful in dealing with the problem of domestic violence. While many women affirm the overall value of their religious faith, few say that spiritual leaders have supported their struggle to leave an abusive situation. In fact, several women have told me that their pastors’ responses have stifled their healing process.”⁵ For me, the church’s silence on the issue of domestic violence meant that domestic violence was condoned. This added more confusion to my state of being. There were times that I wanted to scream, “I am being abused!” Yet, I continued to assemble weekly with a community of believers of various degrees – some abused and some perpetrators of the violence.

My husband was a substance abuser and abusive; yet, I wanted so badly to honor my marriage vows that I remained in this volatile marriage for two years enduring abuse from seven months after marriage until the end. I was fearful of leaving because of the constant threats and fear for my life, therefore I remained in the marriage. “Breaking up with an abuser can be very hard to do. In fact, leaving a non-abusive partner is generally easier, contrary to what many people believe” writes Lundy Bancroft in *Why Does He Do That?*⁶ I found this to be true.

It was now nearing the end of year two and things had gotten progressively worse. Marriage was certainly not what I had envisioned. I sought relief from being battered by leaving on several occasions but somehow managed to always return. R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, well known for their research on abused women state,

⁵ Al Miles, *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 23.

⁶ Lundy Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*, Reprint ed. (New York, NY: Berkley Books, 2002), 213.

“far from helplessly remaining with violent men, women engage in an active process we refer to as ‘staying, leaving, and returning’.”⁷

In essence, according to Dobash and Dobash, women hope that temporary departure from the home will assist with the perpetrator’s reform.

Women make active and conscious decisions based on their changing circumstances: they leave for short periods in order to escape the violence and to emphasize their disaffection in the hope that this will stop the violence. In the beginning, they are generally not attempting to end the relationship, but are negotiating to reestablish the relationship on a non-violent basis.⁸

I had expectations that being absent temporarily would change my husband’s behavior. Drugs and alcohol were a constant part of my husband’s life and I never knew what to expect. I always thought that the substances of drugs and alcohol were a contributor to the abuse until I read Lundy Bancroft’s book, *Why Does He Do That?* Bancroft helped me to understand that “addiction does not cause partner abuse, and recovery from addiction does not ‘cure’ partner abuse. At the same time, a man’s addiction can contribute in important ways to his cruelty and volatility.”⁹ I could not fully blame my abuse on alcohol and drugs. My husband, the father of my son, was an abuser. It was a fact that I had to accept and with this acceptance, I chose to end this marriage by divorce.

The breakup was painful and dangerous; I was truly fearful of the outcome. I had found a two-bedroom apartment in the city that was income-based and moved out without his knowledge. When my husband discovered I had moved out, he came to the apartment complex and climbed up into the outside ceiling tiles above my front door,

⁷ R. Emerald Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, *Women, Violence & Social Change* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 231.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁹ Bancroft, 191.

recovering the tiles as to not expose his presence. Due to my constant fear, I had one of my cousins escort me to the apartment on this particular day. When we reached the front door and were about to enter, my husband uncovered the ceiling tiles, jumped down and began beating me. My cousin ran and called the police. My husband left before the police arrived but not before giving me a good beating. The next day he approached me on my job and created a disturbing scene. He came armed with a 35mm and approached me, coercing me to be in conversation with him. By now I had realized that I could not conduct a rational conversation with an abusive husband. When I refused to converse with him, he became angry. One of my co-workers witnessed the incident and called security. Security escorted him off the premises. That same week, he moved to Birmingham, Alabama, leaving our previously leased apartment, furniture, clothes and all of his possessions. Several months later he was incarcerated again. For me, however, my embedded theology of taking the vows of “till death do us part” literally, had almost cost me my life.

It was difficult after the divorce. I now had a small baby boy and was overwhelmed with the duties of being a single mother. The divorce alleviated one great thing – relief from the violence; nevertheless, I had many more challenges to overcome emotionally. I experienced a plethora of emotions: anger, denial, low self-esteem, guilt, and shame; however, guilt and shame overwhelmingly followed me. “Shame and guilt could be called the interpersonal emotions, because both tell us there is something wrong between us and the rest of the world. Both ask us to look at ourselves carefully and to make changes in our lives.”¹⁰ I was literally wallowing in guilt and shame. I was divorced

¹⁰ Ronald Potter-Efron and Patricia Potter-Efron, *Letting Go of Shame: Understanding How Shame Affects Your Life* (n.p.: Hazelden, 1989), 3.

but where would I go from here? Even though my ex-husband and I were miles away from each other, I still felt extreme guilt and shame about the abuse and about now being a single parent. Paralyzing questions quickly surfaced: *What was I to tell my son about his father? Would my son have a positive male role model in his life? Who was going to teach him how to mow the lawn or drive a car? Would I ever trust another man and enter into a loving monogamous relationship?* I had more questions than answers. Spiritually, I still attended a church that did not address the issue of domestic violence and was not a resource for helping me cope with my issues of guilt and shame.

For the next six years, I worked and raised my son as a single parent, never entering into an intimate relationship with another man. There was a void in my life. Frequent contact was made with my ex-husband while he was incarcerated through letter writing and occasional visits. By year seven, my ex-husband had completed his prison time and was released. Talk amongst the two of us centered on remarrying. I believed that there was a change in him, possibly reform or rehabilitation and since I had not established a relationship with another man, I entertained the idea of remarrying. I visited him on several occasions in Birmingham, Alabama where he was now living again with his grandmother. After all that I had been through with this man, I was actually considering remarrying a known perpetrator of violence. Guilt and shame really had taken a toll on my mental ability to think logically. Somehow I had come to believe that I really couldn't do any better and that remarrying was better than being alone.

I made elaborate plans in the remarrying process. I was going to have the church wedding ceremony that I had never had previously. I went all out in preparations for this wedding, sparing no expense. My ex-husband and I re-married. For three years of this

second marriage, everything was wonderful. My husband had obtained a job, joined an Alcoholics Anonymous Program, was attending his meetings regularly and had made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Our second child was born and life was good.

By year four, I noticed some inconsistencies in my husband's behavior and the people with whom he had begun to associate. Very soon thereafter, he returned to using alcohol and drugs, and now had even added extramarital affairs to that equation. By the end of year four, the abuse had also reemerged. Having never addressed the guilt and shame from the previous marriage and now experiencing abuse again, my degrees of guilt and shame increased. The brutal cycle of abuse intensified. Suffering abuse again was *déjà vu*. I had already experienced domestic violence from this same man before and yet, here I was again being abused. At the August 2014 Intensive, Bishop Kenneth W. Paramore preached in Chapel on the blind man who was healed by Jesus in Mark 8. Bishop Paramore helped me to understand in that pericope that Jesus took the blind man away from his friends prior to healing him. Bishop Paramore then posed a question that I had pondered for many, many years when he asked, "Why do you keep pulling people back in your life that God has taken out?"¹¹ Twelve years earlier, God had allowed me to escape a domestically violent marriage yet I had returned to the same violent man from whom God had delivered me. I would have to go through a divorce process again in order to release myself from the domestic violence. I was still engulfed with guilt and shame. Emma J. Justes, in *Please Don't Tell*, articulated my plot at this stage of my life when she wrote, "when a person has been the victim of abuse perpetrated by another person, the victim feels shame about what has been done to them. What has been done in violence

¹¹ Kenneth W. Paramore, "Blurred Vision," Sermon, Mark 8:22-26, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, August 19, 2014.

and violation causes victimized persons to experience themselves in a shameful way.”¹²

Just as it had before, leaving this marriage for a second time almost cost me bodily harm. Severing ties occurred this time after an explosive night of verbal and physical abuse. When my husband left the house, I left with the kids, retreating to a safe place. On the next day, I returned to the house to get the car and take the children to school. Unbeknown to me, my husband was sitting in his truck in the back yard and when I took our daughter to school, he followed me. He tried to coerce me out of the vehicle. Other parents were dropping their children off at school while I remained inside the vehicle. This terrorism went on for about thirty minutes with his anger escalating. While this was occurring, our daughter was still in the vehicle with me, not fully comprehending what was happening. I finally attempted to get out of the car, somehow believing that if our daughter was beside me, he would not try to harm me. As I was trying to escort her into the school, my husband tore my tee shirt, ripping it badly and exposing my breasts, picked up a brick and stated that he was going to burst me in the head. Parents alerted school personnel and they in turn notified the police. Two police patrol cars entered the grounds of the school. One officer attended to my needs while the other officer talked with my husband. I asked the officer to escort me home to get some clothes, and I never returned to him or the house again until I was granted possession in the divorce. Double victimization, the appropriate name for my experience, did not help my feelings of guilt and shame. As a twice divorcee of a perpetrator of violence and a keeper of the secret that I had been abused, guilt and shame weighed heavily on my life and my decisions. Justes writes, “Keepers of secrets who have been abused or violated by others feel shame about

¹² Emma J. Justes, *Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 86.

their experience even though they did not cause the experience. When we are not at fault, we can still find ways to blame ourselves for what has been done to us. Telling what has happened; we fear, will confirm our role and solidify that shame.”¹³ I am sure that people suspected that I was being abused; however, I was ashamed to tell anyone about my abuse. I somehow believed that I would be labeled and carry a stigma if I allowed anyone to know that I was a victim of domestic violence. So instead, I suffered the guilt and shame silently and alone.

After leaving the house, I moved in temporarily with my sister while undergoing divorce proceedings. The divorce took almost six months before completion. I hired an attorney and filed an uncontested divorce, yet my husband refused to sign the papers. After realizing that I was not returning to this unstable marriage again, he reluctantly agreed to sign the papers. He was so accustomed to me following an autopilot cycle of leaving and returning that he was certain I would change my mind about divorcing him. I made a decision and this time I was sticking with it. Chip and Dan Heath, in *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*, writes, “it’s hard to interrupt these autopilot cycles, because, well, that’s the whole point of autopilot. We don’t think about what we’re doing. We drift along in life, floating on the wake of past choices, and it’s easy to forget that we have the ability to change direction.”¹⁴ The Heaths discuss a term called “tripwires” which are “signals that would snap us awake at exactly the right moment, compelling us to reconsider a decision or to make a new one.”¹⁵ A second

¹³ Justes, 86.

¹⁴ Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work* (New York, NY: Crown Business, 2013), 221.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 222.

marriage to the same abusive man with repeated abuse ignited a tripwire for me. It was either to divorce this man for good, end up in jail, or end up in the grave.

While I made the decision to end the marriage, I went through severe depression and limited activity. For the first three months after the divorce, my life consisted of going to work, going home, and getting in bed. There were days I did not even want to get out of bed. My son, Jason, took care of his sister, Jasmine, for three months as I continued this depressive routine, completely overwhelmed with guilt and shame. I felt that God was silent and absent from my life. I felt rejected, abandoned, alone, guilty and shameful and my self-esteem was at an all-time low. I was convinced that I was the latest topic of discussion, so I disassociated from family and friends. I avoided people at all costs. I had more questions than answers, with paralyzing questions surfacing once again: *What am I going to do now? How will I make it? Can I afford to keep the house and take care of two children? How will this divorce affect the children? What will people think of me? How many people know that I was being abused? What did I do to cause the abuse?* These questions plagued my very existence. There were weekends when I pulled the cover over my head while in bed and simply cried. After three months of this depressive, guilt ridden and shameful behavior, Jason finally exclaimed, “Mom, you can’t keep living like this. Dad has moved on with his life, and it is time that you accept that fact and move on too. You have two children to raise; now, snap out of it because we need you.” There was nothing more impactful for me than the wisdom proclaimed by Jason, a child. Wise words are usually proclaimed by older people, yet on this day, my son had provided me with wise advice that would literally change my life, my behavior and my activities. Very, very, slowly, I regained my composure and began to live again. I

underwent two years of psychological counseling. Healing began only after I was able to dialogue about my experiences. Opening up was not easy, yet it was therapeutic. Pivotal to my ongoing healing was focus group sharing with other women who had also experienced domestic violence. During this time, I was able to share through storytelling the horrible ordeal of being abused and really work through the aftereffects of guilt and shame.

Domestic Violence is an issue that is unfortunately prevalent throughout the world. As stated earlier, I was not the only woman attending my local church who was abused. Moreover, the National Coalition against Domestic Violence posted on their website on September 11, 2014, the following abbreviated statement that substantiates that domestic violence is a prevalent problem globally:

The National Coalition against Domestic Violence (NCADV) supports the National Football League (NFL) in its efforts to prevent domestic violence by suspending Ray Rice indefinitely. To finally be heard and have people understand the impact of domestic violence is encouraging. However, although this is a step in the right direction, NCADV recognizes that domestic violence does not live only on the football field. Violence against women spans worldwide. As a country, we have to look at domestic violence as a national problem – affecting women and families of all races, cultures, and income levels.¹⁶

Domestic Violence is not just a National Football League issue, domestic violence is a worldwide issue. It is an epidemic that can directly or indirectly touch all of us in one way or the other, whether it is through known and reported cases of family members and friends, or through our own case. United Nations Secretary General, General Ban Ki-moon, states that “violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women’s lives, on their families and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence – yet the reality

¹⁶ “Domestic Violence is Not Only an NFL Issue,” National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, accessed September 11, 2014, <http://www.ncadv.org/>.

is that too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned."¹⁷ Similarly, Jenny Youngman writes, "the fact is that every ethnicity, every age group, every socioeconomic status, the rural, the suburban, the perfectly healthy, and the physically impaired – they are all affected by domestic violence,"¹⁸ proving that domestic violence is definitely widespread. My own case has driven urgency for this work, for I understand that even after ending the abusive relationship, residual guilt and shame still have to be addressed. Left unaddressed, guilt and shame will have a detrimental effect on the survivor of domestic violence and continued victimization is likely to occur. Positing from my own healing of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence, as well as drinking from the well of my experiences, has driven the urgency of this ministry project. Walter Fluker, in *Ethical Leadership*, posits that "leaders who are unable or ill prepared to reenter their own personal constructions of morality have difficulty appreciating and participating in the life worlds of others."¹⁹

Project Context

My context lies in the church, Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, where I serve as Senior Pastor. Rock Star is located in a small rural town of South

¹⁷ General Ban Ki-moon, "How Widespread is Violence Against Women," Unite to End Violence Against Women, United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI/2498, (February 2008) accessed May 23, 2013, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf>.

¹⁸ Jenny Youngman, "Dealing with Domestic Violence," October 22, 2011, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/article/entry/1941/dealing-with-domestic-violence>.

¹⁹ Walter Earl Fluker, *Ethical Leadership: the Quest for Character, Civility, and Community (Prisms) (Prisms)* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 56.

Georgia called Fitzgerald, Georgia. Fitzgerald has a population of 9,048.²⁰ The female population in Fitzgerald is 4,865,²¹ and there are 901 homes led by single females.²² The population is comprised of 51.4% African Americans, 43.2% White, 4.3% Hispanic, 0.4% American Indian and 0.9% Asian.²³ The per capita money income in 2012 was \$12,955.00 with 38.4% of the population living below poverty level.²⁴ The major employers in Fitzgerald are: American Blanching Company, Ben Hill Mental Retardation Services, Cynderellas, Dorminy Medical Center, Gilman Building Products, Modern Dispersion South, Shaw Industries Group, Southern Veneer Products, and Wal-Mart.²⁵ Lily of the Valley, a non-profit organization that addresses Domestic Violence also operates in Fitzgerald.

There are 182 churches in Fitzgerald, Georgia with Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the context of my project, being the largest African American Church in the area. Purchased in 1998 from a White congregation which relocated due to demographic changes in the community, Rock Star sits in the midst of a community which was once thriving. There are a mixture of housing projects, singular family homes, trailers and empty houses that need to be torn down, all within the community. There are

²⁰ United States Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, Fitzgerald, Georgia, accessed January 3, 2014, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1329528.html>.

²¹ Suburban Stats, Fitzgerald, Georgia, Population, Demographics and Stats, accessed October 22, 2014, <http://suburbanstats.org/population/Georgia/how-many-people-live-in-fitzgerald>.

²² Suburban Stats, Fitzgerald, Georgia, Population, Demographics and Stats, accessed October 22, 2014, <http://suburbanstats.org/population/Georgia/how-many-people-live-in-fitzgerald>.

²³ United States Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, Fitzgerald, Georgia, accessed January 3, 2014, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1329528.html>.

²⁴ United States Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, Fitzgerald, Georgia, accessed January 3, 2014, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1329528.html>.

²⁵ Georgia Encyclopedia, Ben Hill County, Georgia, accessed October 22, 2014, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/counties/ben-hill>.

five churches within two miles of Rock Star. The Ben Hill County Head Start is one block away, and the old health department building, which Rock Star now owns, is next door to the Head Start.

There are 296 persons on the membership roll, with the median age of the congregation being sixty-five. The average attendance for the 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning worship service is seventy-four. As an integral part of The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Rock Star adheres to an episcopal form of polity which means we are governed by Bishops. Being part of the Methodist system, itinerant pastors lead the congregation and are appointed annually by the Presiding Bishop. In the last eight years, Rock Star has changed pastors six times. Historically, Rock Star has had one long standing pastor, who pastored for nine years consecutively. I am the first female appointed pastor in the church's ninety-two year history.

Although the pain is evident for domestic violence survivors, there is a lack of ministry at the local church where guilt and shame can be addressed. It is a silent subject, and many people suffer in silence. Since coming to Rock Star, I have spoken from the pulpit on domestic violence and proclaimed a Domestic Violence Awareness Sunday. At one of our worship services, three women, ranging in ages from twenty-three to fifty years old, identified themselves as victims of domestic violence. During a conversation with the twenty-three year old victim, it was revealed that she had been dating a fifty-three year old abusive male for three years. The abuse began at the onset of their relationship and has continued throughout. It was then apparent to me that people are suffering in the church; and the church sadly had been doing little to alleviate their suffering. There are many more that have not come forward. Something has to be done!

Rick Warren wrote a devotional entitled “Don’t Waste Your Pain.” In his devotional, Warren pointed out that “your greatest ministry will flow out of your pain – not out of your strengths or your talents.”²⁶ The domestic violence that I experienced was indeed painful and my passion for helping others has grown out of my pain. Warren’s challenge was to refrain from being silent about your pain and to use it as a means for helping others:

Don’t waste your pain. If you hide it and hold it back, it doesn’t do any good. But if you’re honest with God and yourself and with other people, God can use the thing you hate the most in your life, that you’re most disappointed by, and that you wish had never happened. God says, you can’t change what happened to you. But I can use it for your benefit and for my purposes. When you’re willing to share your brokenness, I can use it to help other people.²⁷

Thus, it is my past experience of domestic violence that drives this ministry project.

Overcoming guilt and shame can be realized with the help of caring, listening, and a concerned community. The purpose of this project is to shatter the silence of domestic violence by creating a safe, healthy space for dialog and processing, and to move toward a more favorable outcome as they transition into a new life as conquerors.

This project seeks to utilize liberation theology, feminist theology and womanist theology. Domestic violence is an injustice. “Violence against women is the most prevalent and the most hidden injustice in our world today.”²⁸ To understand domestic violence, you must experience it. “Every abused person needs to make sense out of their experience in order to come to some resolution of the abuse. Christian teachings and

²⁶ Rick Warren, “Daily Hope with Rick Warren,” September 12, 2014 [3:34 AM (GMT-06:00)] accessed September 12, 2014, Connect@newsletter.purposedriven.com.

²⁷ Warren, 2014.

²⁸ Jim Wallis, “It’s Time for Outrage: Sexual Violence and the Church,” *Sojourners*, 05-16-2013, 1, accessed September 12, 2014, <http://sojo.net//>.

attitudes are a part of that.”²⁹ The attitude of the pastors and our Christian Educators plays a vital role in how the abused internalize their experience. Hildebrand further states that “those Christian virtues and values which hamper a successful recovery from abuse must be challenged.”³⁰ Domestic violence, as well as one’s suffering with the aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence, is an injustice. Using liberation theology and feminist theology is important because they both begin with the experience of injustice. “Whereas, traditional theories of justice have begun from a position of rightness – focusing on the maintenance of right relationships, liberation theology and feminist theology begin with the experience of injustice. They challenge previously-held paradigms.”³¹ I will challenge the church for being silent on the issue of domestic violence and thus contributing to continued victimization.

Dr. Edward Smith in a lecture at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia stated that “in order to understand our present situation – indeed even to experience it – we must interpret it.”³² Liberation theology, feminist theology, and womanist theology will assist in interpreting our experience.

It is time for the Church to take its rightful position of speaking up against the issue of domestic violence and helping its parishioners deal with the aftereffects of guilt and shame as a result of ending an abusive relationship. Jim Wallis writes in *Sojourners Magazine* an article entitled, “It’s Time for Outrage: Sexual Violence and the Church,”

²⁹ Mary Anne Hildebrand, “Domestic violence: a challenge to Mennonite faith and peace theology.” In *Conrad Grebel Review* 10, no. 1 (December 1, 1992): 73-80. Accessed September 11, 2014, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*, 76.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

³¹ Hildebrand, 76.

³² Edward Smith, *The Doctrines of Providence and Revelation: An Introduction to Philosophy and Theology; The Public Theology Edition* (Atlanta, GA: The Research Press Center, 2001), 45.

that “it’s time for all people of faith to be outraged. It’s time for our Christian leaders to stand up and say that women, made in the very image of God, deserve better. And it’s time for us in the faith community to acknowledge our complicity in a culture that too often not only remain silent, but also can propagate, a false theology of power and dominance.”³³ I take that challenge now!

The aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence critically need to be addressed in the local church by leaders and pastors. The silence on the abuse contributes to continued guilt, shame, and victimization. The following chapter, State of the Art in this ministry project, will examine how the silence on the aftereffects of domestic violence can to be broken as a mean of initiating healing. I propose the use of storytelling, an ancient, well-honored process, as a means of dialoguing, reframing, and reshaping our lives.

³³ Wallis, 2014

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

One of the most crucial times for survivors of domestic violence occurs after the abusive relationship has ended. Meg Kennedy Dugan and Roger R. Hock states, “rarely is adequate consideration given to what many see as one of the most critical times for a survivor of an abusive relationship: the time after the survivor leaves.”¹ The lack of ministry within the church to address the issues of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence hinders survivors of domestic violence from thriving, in their most precarious times of need. In, *Battered African American Women: A Study of Gender Entrapment*, Sharon Ellis Davis substantiates this when she posits, “Domestic violence in African American communities is a crucial issue for the church. African American families are in crisis, and it is imperative that African American churches deal with the issue of domestic violence in African American communities.”²

This project investigates how offering space for domestic violence survivors to meet in peer focus groups and share their stories about the aftereffects of guilt and shame contributes positively to better self-esteem and aids in healing. As a form of pedagogy, survivors of domestic violence can learn to stop blaming and punishing themselves, two

¹ Meg Kennedy Dugan and Roger R. Hock, *It's My Life Now: Starting Over After An Abusive Relationship or Domestic Violence* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), xi.

² Sharon Ellis Davis, *Battered African American Women: a Study of Gender Entrapment* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2014), 99.

contributors to continued victimization. Several books from the social sciences ground this work and inform the need for addressing the aftereffects of guilt and shame of survivors of domestic violence.

In the Christian theological Sourcebook, *Violence against Women and Children*, edited by Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune, an essay written by Emilie Townes, entitled “Washed in the Grace of God,” discusses the importance of speaking out against domestic violence. Emile Townes posits that:

Black folk need to work with Black folk to help create positive images of male and female that are not dominated by someone else’s version of who we are. We must become each other’s harvest and in doing so, we will begin to recognize the gift of life we have in each other and turn away from battering ourselves into victim age. One place to begin to gain these new images is in the life of a church that no longer condones business as usual or transmits religiousized versions of domination and subordination.³

The church must take the lead in shattering the silence on domestic violence. We must advocate against these injustices and hold each other accountable for our actions. Townes further posits that:

We must engage in community-building work that ministers to our souls, lifts our spirits (individually and collectively), assures our connection with each other and to God, and pulls us beyond ourselves. The Black religious community needs to create large spaces of welcome, understanding, and confrontation from the pulpit to its religious programming. Folks need to hear the church say in a clear and unequivocal voice that sexual and domestic violence are not acceptable behaviors but they are lethal values.⁴

These resources will help to fill the void created by a lack of support measures for domestic violence victims in churches; a void that has been shaped as a result of the church’s silence and neglect to act on the issue. Steven R. Tracy, in “Clergy Responses to

³ Emilie Townes, “Washed in the Grace of God,” in *Violence Against Women and Children*, ed. Carol Adams and Marie Fortune (New York: Continuum, 1998), 69.

⁴ Ibid., 69.

Domestic Violence,” writes “while some clergy say very incorrect and harmful things in response to abuse, they are often silent about what does need to be said, namely, that God hates abuse and that domestic violence is sinful and unacceptable. This message is not only urgent for entire congregations, but it can be particularly empowering for abuse victims.”⁵ It is time for churches to stand their ground, alleviate the air of secrecy and address the prevalent issues of guilt and shame that many survivors of domestic violence are experiencing.

Joanne Carlson Brown, and Rebecca Parker, in their essay, “For God So Loved the World?” postulate that “Christianity is an abusive theology that glorifies suffering.”⁶ Their view is based upon Jesus Christ as the suffering servant whose atonement was made for the sins of the world. Brown and Parker write that “Christianity has been a primary – in many women’s lives *the* primary – force in shaping our acceptance of abuse. The central image of Christ on the cross as the savior of the world communicates the message that suffering is redemptive.”⁷ This sends a message that if Jesus suffered, we too should suffer; if Jesus sacrificed for others, we too must sacrifice. The suffering that survivors of domestic violence experience is not liberating or redemptive. Ironically enough, the victims are actually in need of redemption themselves. Brown and Parker further state that:

Christian theology with atonement at the center still encourages martyrdom and victimization. It pervades our society. Our internalization of this theology traps us in an almost unbreakable cycle of abuse...Only if the church is the place where

⁵ Steven R. Tracey, “Clergy Responses to Domestic Violence,” *Mending the Soul* (blog), April 2007, accessed May 18, 2013, <http://www.mendingthesoul.org/2007/04/clergy-responses-to-domestic-violence/>.

⁶ Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, “For God So Loved the World?,” in *Violence Against Women and Children*, ed. Carol Adams and Marie Fortune (New York: Continuum, 1998), 56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

cycles of abuse are named, condemned, and broken can it be a haven of blessing and a place of peace for women.⁸

Thus, the church has much work to do in naming, condemning and working to break the cycle of abuse and change the embedded theology of many parishioners in the congregations. My theology is that Christ voluntarily suffered and is based on Jesus' proclamation of laying down his own life, by his own initiative. In essence, Jesus said the authority and power of my suffering rests with me. It is not God's desire for survivors of domestic violence to continue to live with guilt and shame after ending an abusive relationship.

Davis states that "breaking the gender entrapment of African American battered women requires serious investigation into the doctrinal positions of the church, its praxis as well as its possibilities or impossibilities for liberation."⁹ I believe this is vital. After investigating the doctrines, beliefs, and practices of Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, I am convinced that there are possibilities for liberation once shattering of silence of domestic violence has begun. The possibilities for liberation will begin with the changes in doctrines, beliefs, and practices.

In *Awakening Sleeping Beauty*, Janice Blackmon emphasized that "it is not God's will for people to suffer. Yet, God is with humankind when suffering takes place. Victims of domestic violence suffer as they go through the experience. Survivors of domestic violence suffer the aftereffects even when the outside wounds have healed; they suffer on the inside."¹⁰ The aftereffects that survivors of domestic violence experience can range

⁸ Brown and Parker, 38.

⁹ Davis, *Battered African American Women*, " 137.

¹⁰ Janice D. Blackmon, *Awakening Sleeping Beauty: How Victims of Sexual Abuse Can Reclaim Their Birthright of Wholeness* (Xulon Press, 2011), 47.

from anger, depression, loss, grief, denial, guilt and shame; yet this research focused on guilt and shame. Some of the aftereffects of domestic violence are internal wounds, wounds that are not visible; yet, they are still manifested.

Linda Hollis contrasts internal wounds of domestic violence survivors by sharing an experience of admiring a beautiful gold vase in a curio shop, that was awe inspiring externally, while possessing lines and scratches internally, depicting the designer struggle in fashioning the vase. “Inside was a complexity of lines and scratches. They told a different story than the exterior beauty. They told of the difficulty the designer had while trying to complete this vase.”¹¹ Hollis metaphorically relates the vase to people who look good on the outside but are wounded on the inside. “That vase tells the story of so many of us, who look good and together on the outside but, have wounded interiors. There are designer dresses, shoes, accessories, and perfumes to cover the broken hearts and crushed spirits of women.”¹² Survivors of domestic violence fit this metaphor. Internal scars, wounds, and hurts are real to domestic violence survivors. It is through voice and dialog that these scars, wounds, and hurts can be unveiled and begin a process of healing. Healing begins with sharing. Shame cannot be healed in isolation.

Dr. Ronald Potter-Efron and Patricia Potter-Efron, in *Letting Go of Shame*, repeatedly make the point that “most of us will need help to heal our shame. Shame mends best when it is brought into the light of nonshaming relationships.”¹³ The church is a community where the healing of shame can take place.

¹¹ Linda H. Hollies, *Inner Healing for Broken Vessels: A Domestic Violence Survival Guide* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2006), 11-12.

¹² Ibid., 12.

¹³ Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron, 205.

Andrew Sung Park agrees with Janice Blackmon and Linda Hollies concerning internal wounds of domestic violence survivors. Park introduces a Korean term, *han*, in his work, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, which also substantiates those external wounds, can cause internal wounds. Park writes that “*han* is the rupture of the soul caused by abuse, exploitation, injustice and violence. When the soul is hurt so much, it bursts symbolically; it aches. When the aching soul is wounded again by external violence, the victim suffers yet a deeper ache. The wound produced by such repeated abuse and injustice is *han* in the depth of the soul.”¹⁴ As a victim and survivor of domestic violence, there were many instances where I looked woundless externally but was screaming and experiencing pain internally. This was not an isolated event. Park further contends that “when people’s deep wounds are not healed, the wounds become vortexes of troubled waters, intertwined with their own instinct of survival and fear.”¹⁵

Park distinguishes the difference between guilt experienced by wrongdoers versus those who have been wronged.

While wrongdoers’ guilt is natural, that of the wronged is unnatural. When we commit a sin or wrong another, the guilt we experience over that act is healthy. Unhealthy guilt, on the other hand, arises from a defense mechanism. One of the symptoms of the wronged is self-blame, shame, and guilt.¹⁶

Guilt impacts domestic violence victims and survivors on a daily basis and permeates all that we do. Park classifies this type of guilt as inappropriate guilt and states that “inappropriate guilt traps us in a repetitive self-blame and destructive self-denigration,

¹⁴ Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 11-12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

escalating our irrational anxieties.”¹⁷ Many survivors of domestic violence remained in abusive relationship too long as a result of feeling guilty and trapped. Park continues that “some other people of inappropriate guilt cannot accept forgiveness from victims and from themselves, and thus develop a distorted self-image. They become withdrawn and rigid in their personalities.”¹⁸ I agree with Dr. Park on guilt bearing a factor on a distorted self-image, especially for survivors of domestic violence who struggle with forgiveness for their perpetrators and themselves. Many survivors have been affected by verbal abuse, being constantly told negative things about their attributes (image, bodies, capabilities, etc.), and have internalized those words. As a result, they find it hard to forgive.

While Dr. Park classifies guilt as unnatural and unhealthy, Ty C. Colbert, a licensed clinical psychologist, classifies guilt into two types of emotions: true and false guilt. “The key to distinguishing true from false guilt is whether the action was intentional. In other words, you are not guilty of any wrongdoing unless you intentional chose to do something wrong.”¹⁹ Colbert posits that a real acquainted sense of false guilt is derived “when others attempt to control us or belittle us by making us feel inadequate, guilty or bad about ourselves.”²⁰ Consider the wheel on a bicycle, for example. Control would be the center wheel that turns domestic violence, and belittlement would be the spokes on the wheel. Survivors of domestic violence have continuously ringing in their heads that expel remarks such as “You are not good enough” and “Nobody wants you,” thus creating false guilt. The church must empower domestic violence survivors to know

¹⁷ Park, 47.

¹⁸ Ibid., 48.

¹⁹ Ty C. Colbert, *Why Do I Feel Guilty When I've Done Nothing Wrong?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993), 9.

²⁰ Ibid., 15.

that they are created in the *Imago Dei* (image of God), and that they are special, unique and loved by God. Colbert explains that:

False guilt gives us a false sense of control, and from this false sense of control compulsive perfectionist behavior often arises. The more we use false guilt to push down the pain, the more we need to believe that by being more perfect, more responsible and consequently more guilt-free, all future pain will be avoided.²¹

Thus, empowerment will address that we are not perfect individuals and the process of healing will sometimes be painful; however, healing is obtainable.

Guilt and shame are often termed together but are two different and distinct terms. Having clearly defined guilt, one of the mental experiences of survivors of domestic violence, shame will now be examined. Shame, also the foci of this project, is too a different emotional aspect for survivors of domestic violence.

Carolyn Akua L. McCrary, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at the Interdenominational Theological Center, writes in her essay, “*Intimate Violence Against Black Women and Internalized Shame: A Womanist Pastoral Counseling Perspective*,” that “shame is an overall self-attribution of failure and ‘wrongness.’ It is a global self-interpretation that I am wrong. I failed. I am bad. Even I am worthless.”²² Survivors of domestic violence philosophy are that they have done something to deserve their abuse and they internalize that guilt and shame. Abuse is never justified. Gershen Kaufman, professor and author of *The Psychology of Shame*, articulates

Shame is a loss of face. . . . Shame feels like a wound made from the inside. Shame is dishonor, fallen pride, a broken spirit. The beaten humiliated individual, whether defeated as a child by a brutalizing parent or defeated as an adult by a dead-end career or marriage, has been defeated by shame, has endured it until it has broken the self. If unchecked, shame can engulf the self, immersing the

²¹ Colbert, 14.

²² Carolyn Akua L. McCrary, “Intimate Violence Against Black Women and Internalized Shame: A Womanist Pastoral Counseling Perspective,” *The Journal of the ITC* 28 (2001): 3-37.

individual deeper into despair. To live with shame is to feel alienated and defeated, never quite good enough to belong. And secretly the self feels to blame; the deficiency lies within. Shame is without parallel a sickness of the soul.²³

Colbert identifies shame as positive and negative and labels them as either constructive or destructive. According to Colbert, “constructive shame is natural in small amounts and necessary for the proper development of an individual’s selfhood and conscience.”²⁴ In essence, Colbert is saying that constructive shame is to our benefit. Colbert states that “constructive shame is beneficial because it helps in our emotional and cognitive growth. Because constructive shame gives us the potential for introspection, it enables us to become more whole.”²⁵ On the other hand, destructive shame, according to Colbert, is “the feelings of worthlessness that result when part of the selfhood has been made unlovable or worthless by a violating act.”²⁶ It is this category, destructive shame, which survivors of domestic violence experience. Survivors of domestic violence have survived violation by an intimate partner and must work through healing of this shame. Colbert states that “destructive shame is not an extension of the natural shame response, but results from living in a violating world. More precisely, it is caused by the pain that results when one human being hurts another.”²⁷ Destructive shame has a detrimental effect because according to Colbert, destructive shame “is an attack on the selfhood, leaving us feeling bad, dirty, or worthless.”²⁸ It is time to engage survivors of domestic

²³ Gershen Kaufman PhD, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes* (New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, 1989), 24.

²⁴ Colbert, 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

violence to become empowered and realize their own self-worth. It is time to eliminate destructive shame in the lives of survivors of domestic violence. Healing the wounds of destructive shame for survivors of domestic violence is making justice.

Emilie Townes, renowned scholar and dean of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, in her essay, “Washed in the Grace of God,” states that

We are called to make justice. For it is justice that tells us each of us has worth, each of us has the right to have that worth recognized and respected, each of us has a right to be known for whom we are. Justice holds us accountable to and with each other.²⁹

It is this type of justice that is imperative for the church to work toward for survivors of domestic violence. Justice must begin in the church.

Ty C. Colbert, a licensed clinical psychologist states that:

Healing shame requires an outside source of affirmation and unconditional love. Outside sources can also include a spouse, a counselor, friends, support groups, a good working environment and God. In fact, the more proper support we have surrounding us, the more chances we have to become healed.³⁰

The church must work with survivors of domestic violence to validate their worth, hear their stories, believe them, and work toward a more favorable outcome. The process will entail that survivors of domestic violence share their stories as a means for healing, while church leaders offer support, not condemnation or unsupportive advice.

In *Sisters of the Yam*, author and feminist Bell Hooks posit that “there is no healing in silence.”³¹ Reading about others’ liberation experienced through articulation and dialog is encouragement for breaking the silence of traumatic experiences for

²⁹ Townes, 67.

³⁰ Colbert, 58.

³¹ Bell Hooks, *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 16.

survivors of domestic violence. It was in sharing my story as a survivor of domestic violence that inner healing began to come to fruition.

Withholding truth is a contributor to brokenness. In, *Sisters of the Yam*, Bell Hooks states that “Many black women in the United States are brokenhearted. They walk around in daily life carrying so much hurt, feeling wasted, yet pretending in every area of their life that everything is under control. It hurts to pretend. It hurts to live with lies.”³² Many times survivors of domestic violence are in denial about the aftereffects of guilt and shame that they are experiencing as a result of surviving domestic violence. Until we are able to name guilt and shame as an aftereffect, we will not be able to heal.

A poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar, entitled, “We Wear The Mask,” speaks to the falsehood that survivors of domestic violence live until they adequately address, articulate and begin to work through the aftereffects of guilt and shame.

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,
This debt we pay to human guile,
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.
Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.³³

Hooks writes, “Paul Laurence Dunbar’s much quoted poem gives eloquent witness to how conscious black folks were of the way that they had to practice falsehood in daily life.”³⁴ The time has come to remove the mask. Survivors of domestic violence lie to themselves that everything is okay when really they are, screaming silently. Besides, the

³² Hooks, 19.

³³ Ibid., 13.

³⁴ Ibid., 13.

church, which is designed to be so liberating, has actually become oppressive. This can change. I believe the oppression is a result of the church's failure to adequately address the issues and aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence.

Hooks suggests,

In black life, the church has been one of the few places that have encouraged black folks to live truthful lives. Yet hypocrisy has come to be a central characteristic of the contemporary black church. The old black folks took the Biblical passage that declares 'the truth will set you free' to heart. And, while the church might have changed, these words are still true.³⁵

Truth speaking can be liberating. Bell Hooks and Tyler Perry are two advocates of speaking truth and its liberating results. According to Hooks, "their healing power can be felt in black women's lives if we dare to look at ourselves, our lives, our experiences and then, without shame, courageously name what we see."³⁶ Naming what we see can sometimes be difficult, but it is so necessary to heal.

Tyler Perry, actor, director, screenwriter and survivor of sexual abuse, concurs with this theology and is probably best encapsulated in his view that healing for him occurred when he told the truth publically on a national televised show of Oprah Winfrey with 200 men who had been sexually abused. Perry stated,

From the moment I agreed to do the show until the day I actually did it, I had so much anxiety, so many questions. I wasn't sure I should do it until the second it was over. I mean, the very second I had spoken my truth, it was as if I had removed a five-ton weight from my chest. I felt as if every bit of evil that these molesters had sewn into the inseam of my soul had been ripped away. I was so glad I did it. I felt so much lighter and freer. I didn't realize how much power lay in talking about it. I didn't know that part of lifting my own shame was in using

³⁵ Hooks, 20.

³⁶ Ibid., 20.

my own voice. Out of all the years of self-work and discovery, I think that moment was the one that did the most good on my journey to healing.³⁷

Although Tyler Perry and the other 200 men who spoke publically on the nationally televised Oprah Winfrey show are male survivors, shame knows no gender bounds and is experienced by both male and female survivors of domestic violence. Howard Fradkin, a licensed psychologist, advocates that “the most likely result of shame is keeping silent about what was done to you.”³⁸ Fradkin further believes that “a group experience would be the most powerful way to help men break their silence, heal their shame and join forces to build a lasting brotherhood capable of providing a lifeline of necessary support.”³⁹ The church must become a trusted place where the truth can be shared. This project advocates group experience to break the silence, heal the guilt and shame and join forces for support of women survivors of domestic violence.

Sharing one’s story has been documented as a means of healing. Repeatedly Potter-Efron, Colbert and Fradkin all posit that healing shame is done through storytelling. Most of the experiences and wisdom documents the power and healing of abuse aftereffects through storytelling.

Another work that is important in the storytelling theme is found in *African American Pastoral Care*, where Edward Wimberly outlines the narrative approach to pastoral care. Wimberly states that “stories function in the caring setting to bring healing and wholeness to the lives of persons and families within the black pastoral care

³⁷ Howard Fradkin, *Joining Forces: Empowering Male Survivors to Thrive* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2012), xvi.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, xx.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

context.”⁴⁰ Wimberly outlines the basis of storytelling and emphasize the necessity also of story-listening. Story-listening, according to Wimberly, involves empathically hearing the story of the person involved in life struggles. Empathy means that we attend to the person with our presence, body posture, and nonverbal responses. It also means using verbal responses to communicate that we have understood and are seeking to understand the person’s story as it is unfolding.⁴¹

The need to provide space in the context of the local church is imperative to address the aftereffects of guilt and shame for domestic violence survivors for storytelling and story-listening. Fradkin writes that “disclosing the secret of your abuse will help you let go of the shame once you feel safe enough to tell your story. There is significant healing in knowing that you are not alone.”⁴² As a means of healing, it is important and imperative that survivors be encouraged to share their stories and dialog about those detrimental feelings and emotions of guilt and shame. It is imperative that the church takes the lead in regaining its focus of being a place of providing liberation. Breaking the silence about abuse and its effects are liberating. Fradkin suggests that “telling the story of your abuse is a key part of your recovery.”⁴³ Similarly, sharing my own personal story was therapeutic. It allowed me to receive empathy and support from caring peers and to realize that I was not alone. We must show love and acceptance to those who have experienced abuse and be willing to accompany them on their healing journey as they work through the aftereffects of their guilt and shame. Justes in her book, *Please Don’t*

⁴⁰ Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 3.

⁴¹ Fradkin, 7-8.

⁴² Ibid., 80.

⁴³ Ibid., 79.

Tell, surmises that “we are a bridge for others to be able to receive and accept God’s grace and love when we carry a clear awareness of the boundless love of God for ourselves and for others.”⁴⁴ May God’s grace abound in the local church as we become that bridge that carries love and acceptance to survivors of domestic violence who are suffering with the aftereffects of guilt and shame.

The healing from guilt and shame will not occur in isolation, so shattering the silence and creating space in the local church is pivotal to beginning the healing process for survivors of domestic violence. Throughout this paper I have shown how sharing one’s story has been used as a means of healing of domestic violence, be it male or female victims. I suggest that the church is an appropriate place for conveying hope and healing of the accompanying guilt and shame for these survivors. Moreover, I am convinced that it is the church’s duty to address openly the prevalent issues of guilt and shame associated with surviving domestic violence.

There are biblical, historical, and theological foundations that undergird this work in establishing focus groups in the local church and allowing the voices of survivors of domestic violence to be heard in creating their own healing. It is these foundations that will be shared in the following chapter, as a means of exploring more fully the methodology and the rationale for the chosen methods used in this project.

⁴⁴ Justes, 128.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUNDATIONS

Biblical

2 Samuel 13:1-22

13 Some time passed. David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar; and David's son Amnon fell in love with her. ² Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah; and Jonadab was a very crafty man. ⁴ He said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." ⁵ Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be ill; and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, so that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'" ⁶ So Amnon lay down, and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand." ⁷ Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." ⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. ⁹ Then she took the pan and set them^[a] out before him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, "Send out everyone from me." So everyone went out from him. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, so that I may eat from your hand." So Tamar took the cakes she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. ¹¹ But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." ¹² She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile!" ¹³ As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." ¹⁴ But he would not listen to her; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. ¹⁵ Then Amnon was seized with a very great loathing for her; indeed, his loathing was even greater than the lust he had felt for her. Amnon said to her, "Get out!" ¹⁶ But she said to him, "No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than

the other that you did to me.” But he would not listen to her.¹⁷ He called the young man who served him and said, “Put this woman out of my presence, and bolt the door after her.”¹⁸ (Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves; for this is how the virgin daughters of the king were clothed in earlier times.) So his servant put her out, and bolted the door after her.¹⁹ But Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore the long robe that she was wearing; she put her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as she went.²⁰ Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart.” So Tamar remained, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom’s house.²¹ When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn,²² But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his sister Tamar.¹

2nd Samuel Background

The background to 2nd Samuel is intriguing and is described by John MacArthur as follows:

First and Second Samuel were considered as one book in the earliest Hebrew manuscripts. They were later divided into the two books by the translators of the Greek version, the Septuagint (LXX), a division also followed by the Latin Vulgate, English translations, and modern Hebrew Bibles. The earliest Hebrew manuscripts entitled the one book Samuel after the man God used to establish the kingship in Israel. Later Hebrew texts and the English versions call the ancient books 1 and 2 Samuel.²

As MacArthur notes,

the books span about 135 years of history. During those years, Israel was transformed from a loosely knit group of tribes under judges to a united nation under the reign of a centralized monarchy. They look primarily at Samuel, Saul who reigned, and David who was king of the united monarchy.³

¹ 2 Samuel 13:1-22 (NRSV)

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 299.

³ *Ibid.*, 300.

MacArthur shares that one of the theological themes of the Books of Samuel is that “the Books of Samuel demonstrate the personal and national effects of sin.”⁴ In Second Samuel 13:1-22, we see, on one occasion, the reality of domestic violence in the Old Testament. The biblical narrative conveys the aftereffects of domestic violence on the family. David’s two sons, Amnon and Absalom, along with his daughter, Tamar, are the focal point of this story. Phyllis Tribble describes Amnon as “a prince with power, prestige and unrestrained lust,”⁵ while describing Tamar as “a princess to whom belong wisdom, courage, and unrelieved suffering.”⁶

A summary of the text will point out that Tamar was raped by a familiar, family member, her half-brother, Amnon. Amnon had a lustful appetite for Tamar and desired to lay with her. Their cousin, Jonadab devised a scheme that would put Tamar in Amnon’s bedroom at the request of their father, King David. While Tamar was fulfilling a request to cook cakes for her brother, Amnon (who had pretended to be ill), he proposed that they have sex. Although Tamar resisted the proposition, Amnon forced himself upon her and raped her.

Tamar soon realized that domestic violence aftereffects brought shame. Used and abused, Tamar was driven with her shame from the door of her callous brother. The shame that Tamar experienced could not be hidden, erased, or washed away with soap and water; and feeling humiliated, bruised, bleeding, frustrated, feeling guilty, and shamed as a result, Tamar went into public mourning. She put ashes on her head, tore her

⁴ MacArthur, 301.

⁵ Phyllis Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narrative* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 37.

⁶ Ibid., 37.

long sleeved garment, which symbolized that she was no longer a virgin, placed her hands on her head and cried aloud as she ran to her blood brother Absalom's house. Tamar was now a devalued princess, but she did not try to hide what had happened to her; and yet, no one cared. Absalom immediately discerned what had taken place and while Tamar confirmed the abuse, Absalom insisted that Tamar keep silent. Knowing that his sister had been abused, Absalom only advice to her was to keep silent. Emma Justes in her book, *Please Don't Tell*, writes that "the desire to maintain power, image, name and respect drives the need to keep secrets hidden."⁷ Absalom's only concern was for secrecy and as a result, Tamar's voice was silenced by Absalom.

Tamar remained a "desolate" woman in Absalom's house, constantly weeping, and rehearsing the scenes of the rape in her mind. She was lifeless, moping about like an empty shell, voiceless, ostracized, guilt ridden and shamed. Justes posits that "for Tamar there would be no voice, no marriage, no children, no respect, no place except for her space in her brother's house – as a desolate woman. We cannot count how many women since Tamar have become desolate women!"⁸ And exactly how does this desolation take place? Why, failing to address the issues of guilt and shame for survivors of domestic violence will leave one desolate.

By failing to address the issues of guilt and shame for survivors of domestic violence, the victims will often become desolate as they are forced to live with the shame filled secrets of their abuse. Shame filled secrets that can and should be shared in a church community, to provide the survivor of domestic violence hope and initiate healing. Justes writes that, "the experience of being part of a community can offer an

⁷ Justes, 128.

⁸ Ibid., 131.

antidote for shame, so one could expect that the church would be the ideal place for the elimination or prevention of secrets.”⁹

David found out what happened yet he failed to chastise his son. Interesting to note, both Absalom and David exhibited silence to domestic violence. Even more interesting, though, is why David exhibited silence and failed to discipline his son. As King, it was David’s responsibility to uphold the law. Leviticus 20:17 states “if a man marries his sister, whether his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They must be cut off publicly from their people. He has had sexual intercourse with his sister, he will bear his punishment.”¹⁰ David failed to uphold this law. As a Father, it was David’s responsibility to discipline his son. But David had sinned previously by lusting after and committing adultery with Bathsheba, impregnating her and eventually having her husband, Uriah, killed. Justes helps us to understand that “secrecy and violence span generations: David takes Bathsheba and Amnon lays Tamar. Amnon replicates his father’s behavior. Where secrets are hidden, similar dynamics often emerge.”¹¹ Amnon was now following in David’s footsteps. If David had upheld the law, Amnon would have been banned from Israel and held accountable for his actions. David was the father of both Tamar and Amnon, the abused and the abuser. MacArthur notes that “fury and indignation were David’s reaction to the report of the rape. Because he did not punish Amnon for his crime, he abdicated his responsibility both as king and as father. The lack of justice in the land would come back

⁹ Justes, 134.

¹⁰ Leviticus 20:17 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

¹¹ Justes, 131.

to haunt David in a future day.”¹² The biblical narrative does not record where David showered Tamar with love and compassion but reveals David’s anger and silence. David did nothing to console his daughter or discipline his son.

Trible states, “David’s anger signifies complete sympathy for Amnon and total disregard for Tamar. How appropriate that the story never refers to David and Tamar as father and daughter! The father identifies with the son; the adulterer supports the rapist; male has joined male to deny justice for the female.”¹³

The aftereffects of domestic violence are far reaching and affect not only the survivor but children, families, churches, and society as a whole. Tamar remained barren, unloved, and unable to marry or be given in marriage. She had been violated, abused, and nothing is ever mentioned of her again in Scripture. There is an internalization of shame. Kaufman states that, “it is through imagery (encompassing visual, auditory, and kinesthetic dimensions) that the self internalizes experience. What are internalized are images or scenes that have become imprinted with affect.”¹⁴ Tamar exhibited low self-esteem and like other survivors of domestic violence, rehearsed negative scenes over and over again in her mind. Scott Tatum in, *The Teacher’s Commentary* states, “the circumstances of domestic violence may vary; nonetheless, the results are always the same – guilt, shame, hatred and death.”¹⁵ I disagree with hatred and death always being results of domestic violence; however, I do believe that all survivors of domestic violence experience some degree of guilt and shame.

¹² MacArthur, 370.

¹³ Trible, 53-54.

¹⁴ Kaufman, 58-59.

¹⁵ Scott L. Tatum, “2 Samuel” in, *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Franklin H. Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972), 187.

Tamar lived the remainder of her life not realizing that she was fearfully and wonderfully made. Tamar was now disqualified from marriage because she was no longer a virgin, an identity taken from her by force. Tamar was not made aware that her father loved her or that God loved her.

Tamar's story must never be diminished, dismissed or forgotten. Tamar's story is the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34 story. Pamela Cooper-White in her book, *The Cry of Tamar*, shares how the story of Tamar is still relevant today when she writes,

- Tamar was sexually assaulted, not by a stranger, but by someone she knew.
- The violation took place not in the dark alley or in a desolate park, but by a member of her own family, at home.
- Tamar was exploited through one of her most vulnerable traits – her kindness and her upbringing to take care of others.
- Tamar said 'no', her 'no' was not respected.
- When Tamar sought help, she was told to keep quiet.
- The process for achieving justice and restitution was taken out of her hands entirely and carried forward by her brother – it became men's business.
- In the end, it was her perpetrator for whom her father mourned, not for her.
- The end of Tamar's story happens without her.¹⁶

Tamar's story is my story. And unfortunately, Tamar's story is the story of many other abused, voiceless women. *Where was the church in Tamar's abuse? Where was the King? Where was God? Who was speaking out? Who is speaking up against the crime and injustice of domestic violence?*

¹⁶ Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response*, 2 ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 29.

In a paper presented in 2008 at the Twenty-ninth Claremont Conference on Philosophy of Religion by Leah Rediger Schulte and Tammi J. Schneider entitled, “The Absence of the Deity in Rape Scenes of the Hebrew Bible,” they compared the stories of rape in the Hebrew Bible. Schulte and Schneider theorized that “the deity is absent in narrative cases of rape in the Hebrew Bible.”¹⁷ Furthermore, Schulte and Schneider writes that, “when we first compared the stories of Tamar (2 Sam 13) and the Levite’s pileges (Judg 19), we were surprised to learn that the deity was absent in both cases.”¹⁸ God does not speak and is not mention in either case.

Schulte and Schneider compared other violent crimes of the Hebrew Bible in which the deity was present. Schulte and Schneider writes,

In each of these five other violence crimes against another’s physical body, namely murder, genocide, physical injury, adultery, and kidnapping, the deity is always present. While the form of the deity’s presence ranges from mention of the deity’s name to the deity speaking with a criminal, the deity is undeniably present. The deity’s presence in these crimes and absence in biblical rape scenes clearly shows an intentional decision on the part of the narrator.¹⁹

The Bible was written by men. This (the ostensible absence of God in times of crisis in women’s lives) substantiates that the men narrators were not concerned about the treatment of women. The silence of God in the rape narratives make it appears that God condones rape. I refute the concept of God condoning rape or any form of domestic violence but agree with Crystal Walker, who writes, “The silence of clergy in response to domestic violence is detrimental to the victims and the perpetrators. As Gods’

¹⁷ Leah Rediger Schulte and Tammi J. Schneider, “The Absence of the Deity in Rape Scenes of the Hebrew Bible,” in *The Presence and Absence of God: Claremont Studies in the philosophy of Religion, Conference 2008* (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, Germany, 2009), 21.

¹⁸ Ibid., 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., 33.

representatives, it is imperative for pastors to take a stand against domestic violence.”²⁰

As Gods’ representative, I choose to take a stand against domestic violence. It is imperative for other pastors to do the same.

It is certainly not enough to know the horrific statistics of domestic violence. We all know them! Neither is it enough for the church to remain silent on the issue of domestic violence. Freedom and empowerment of survivors of domestic violence must begin in the church, as the church is a practical space, of incubation, where movements have been birthed in ages past.

The voices in the church must be the ones to offer hope and empower survivors to be free. The voices in the church hold significant keys of encouragement that assist survivors, like me, to examine who we really are in light of our creative make up. It is time to reinforce that everyone is created in the *Imago Dei* (image of God) and thus are loved by God. It is time for the church to play a pivotal role in reframing images as well as values in the lives of humankind.

New Testament Scripture

In the New Testament, Luke 4:18-19 provides a model to churches for alleviating silence and opening up space to address the aftereffects of guilt and shame for survivors of domestic violence.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim favor for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.²¹

²⁰ Crystal Walker, “Silence Is No Longer an Option: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence” (diss., United Theological Seminary, 2014), 23.

²¹ Luke 4:18, NIV.

Luke Background

According to Youngblood, “Luke was written by a Gentile for Gentiles.”²² Luke, as the author, does not identify himself by name; nonetheless, identification came from early church fathers. “Writing about A.D. 175, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, identified the author as Luke, the companion of Paul. Eusebius agreed adding that Luke was a native of Antioch.”²³

MacArthur shares that “a running theme in Luke’s Gospel is Jesus’ compassion for Gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, tax collectors, sinners, and others often regarded as outcasts in Israel.”²⁴ Women, the largest percentage of survivors of domestic violence are considered outcasts. Yet, Luke shows and “emphasizes the central role of women in the life and ministry of our Lord.”²⁵ Jesus does care about women.

A summary of the text will show that Jesus was in attendance at synagogue worship. A synagogue in Jesus’ time can be compared to our local church. Jesus was invited to read the scripture. Knowles states that, “He chooses part of Isaiah, where the prophet is announcing that God will rescue his people. He describes something like a Jubilee, when invalids are healed, debts cancelled and prisoners released (Isaiah 61:1–9). Sitting down to teach, Jesus says simply, ‘This is happening now—before your very eyes. I am the Jubilee!’” My own case has driven urgency for this work, for I understand that even after ending the abusive relationship, residual guilt and shame still have to be

²² Ronald F. Youngblood, *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishers, 1995), 778.

²³ Ibid., 778.

²⁴ MacArthur, 1265.

²⁵ Ibid., 1266.

addressed. Left unaddressed, guilt and shame will have a detrimental effect on the survivor of domestic violence and continued victimization is likely to occur.²⁶

There are six themes in this pericope: The Spirit of the Lord is on me (first theme); because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor (second theme). He has sent me to proclaim favor for the prisoners (third theme) and recovery of sight for the blind (fourth theme), to set the oppressed free (fifth theme), to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (sixth theme).

The first theme states that Jesus has been anointed for service by God with the Holy Spirit. Nolland states that "the Spirit is upon Jesus by reason of the anointing that occurred at his baptism."²⁷ Anointing provides power and presence of God to do the task that God has set before you. Spragin contends that:

The indication is that this anointing is to a place of both prominence and permanence. Thus Jesus was saying that he had already been chosen and anointed by God for not just the tasks, but more specifically, the office which he now held, which held the responsibility of the tasks he would perform. This event in the synagogue was the public announcement of that anointing.²⁸

As pastors who are anointed by God, we have the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to provide ministries within our church that addresses the aftereffects of guilt and shame as a result of surviving domestic violence. We should not shrink from our responsibility. Jesus never did!

The second theme of being anointed to bring good news to the poor is explained by Clark where he states:

²⁶ Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2001), 476.

²⁷ John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 35a, Luke 1:1-9:20* (Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 196.

²⁸ Ore Lee Spragin Jr., *Commentary On the Gospel of Luke* (n/p: CreateSpaceIndependent Publishing Platform, 2011), 57.

The recipients of the good news were the poor and oppressed. Part of following Jesus meant accepting the ministry that he practiced. Evangelism meant bringing the good news to the poor, outcast and oppressed. If this is evangelism, then isn't addressing spousal and child abuse also part of evangelism? Shouldn't the church be concerned about domestic violence? Even more, if twenty-five percent of women in America have been physically abused, how many people could we reach if we began to address domestic violence?²⁹

In essence, Clark is stating that when the church fails to address domestic violence, it fails to perform evangelism. "All people need Jesus, Jesus came to preach good news to the poor and oppressed. Evangelism means that we practice Jesus' ministry by bringing freedom and justice to all people who are oppressed, whether we consider them in or out of the church."³⁰

Theme three of proclaiming favor to prisoners can be best described as being rescued from oppressive situations. Nolland states that "it is widely agreed that the language of Jubilee release is being picked up in Isaiah 61:1-2."³¹ The year of Jubilee was a time period where prisoners were freed, debt cancelled, and complete rest for the land. Survivors of domestic violence are in bondage to the aftereffects of guilt and shame and in need of being released. Jesus proclaimed that he came for that reason – to release prisoners from whatever captivity they found themselves, not just in the year of Jubilee but always, continuously.

The recovery of sight to the blind in theme four can be seen as healing, both physically and spiritually. To many of the physically blind, Jesus gave the gift of sight; however, on one occasion in the healing of the blind man in Luke 18:35-42, Jesus

²⁹ Clark, 234.

³⁰ Ibid., 235.

³¹ Nolland, 197.

pronounced healing and salvation when he proclaimed, “Go ahead—see again! Your faith has saved and healed you!”³²

Discussion of theme five will show that this pericope is focusing of relieving people of pain associated with being in captivity. The people had been waiting for a Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression. Jesus proclaimed, in this text, that the people need look no further. Their Messiah had come. And as a result of his coming, the captives would be set free. Clark states, “If the church is going to be like Jesus, it must be prophetic.”³³ This means that the church’s praxis must be social justice. “The Jesus in Luke’s gospel was prophetic in that he called the early Christians to practice social justice.”³⁴ Jesus is still calling his church of today to practice social justice, as “Jesus the prophet challenged those in power to attend to the needs of victims.”³⁵

In theme six, Jesus announced that the year of Jubilee had arrived. “Domestic violence victims and their children suffer tremendous scars and shame from their trauma and experiences. The church has the opportunity to enter their lives and aggressively love them and remind them that they have hope in God.”³⁶ God has called the church to take the lead in assisting survivors of domestic violence with the aftereffects of guilt and shame.

The focus of scripture for this project is on the portion that states to announce the year of the Lord’s favor. The year of the Lord’s favor for survivors of domestic violence

³² Luke 18:42 (The Message Bible)

³³ Clark, 236.

³⁴ Ibid., 237.

³⁵ Ibid., 238.

³⁶ Ibid., 250.

is now. Now is the acceptable time for the church to establish ministries for survivors of domestic violence. The urgency of now being the proper time is substantiated by

Craddock when he states:

It is interesting that in Luke's Gospel, the first public work of Jesus as an adult apart from reading Scripture is today. The age of God's reign is here; the eschatological time when God's promises are fulfilled and God's purpose comes to fruition has arrived; those changes for the poor and the wronged and the oppressed will come today. This is the beginning of Jubilee. The time of God is today, and the ministries of Jesus and the Church according to Luke-Acts demonstrates today continued.³⁷

In essence, Craddock is saying that God still expects the church to be the church of social justice today. This means that pastors and churches must publically take a stand against abuse and domestic violence today and work towards healing of guilt and shame for survivors of domestic violence.

Historical Foundation

Violence against women is not unusual and dates back to biblical times. Renita J. Weems, in *Battered Love*, posits that,

Violence against women in the Bible is virtually always cast in sexual terms. Women were punished with rape, beatings, exposure of their private parts, and mutilation of their bodies – and often these things take place at the hands of men who are related to them (e.g. Jephthah's daughter in Judges 11; the virgin daughter in Gibeah and the Levite's concubine in Judges 19; or Tamar in 2 Samuel 13). The correlation drawn repeatedly in prophetic literature between divine judgment and husbands battering their wives is haunting and telling. It suggests that as far back as the days of the biblical writings, women in love were women in trouble. At the very least, it should convince those who dismiss feminist criticism of biblical language and biblical patriarchy as lacking depth,

³⁷ Fred B. Craddock, *Interpretation Luke, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 62.

inconsequential, and trendy that there is probably more than a chance connection between patriarchy and violence against women.³⁸

In patriarchal societies the woman is largely regarded as the property of the man, to do with as he sees fit. Male dominance is still a part of today's society and is a contributor to domestic violence.

In, *Preaching the Women of the Bible*, Lisa M. Davison describes the patriarchal cultures which might be viewed as a contributing factor to domestic violence:

Within patriarchal cultures, women are often seen as property of men and have very limited options for self-determination. When a daughter is born, she is seen as the property of her father and remains as such until she gets married. Then the woman belongs to her husband. If her father dies before marriage, the woman's brothers (or other male relatives) assume that position of authority. Such an understanding objectifies women in the culture, thus their wants and needs are not of primary concern. An example of this leaps out at us in the biblical understanding of adultery. The bible defines adultery as a man having sexual relations with a married or betrothed woman. This crime is not considered to be a crime against the woman but against the woman's husband or betrothed. Since the violated woman is her husband's property, the adulterous male has violated his "land". However, a married man can have sexual relations with a woman who has not been promised or married without being guilty of adultery. Likewise, rape was a crime against the woman's family (father and/or brothers) or husband. The rapist has the right to marry his victim if she is not betrothed/married only after he pay the father fifty shekels.³⁹

Davison further posits that in order to realize the impact of patriarchy on the lives of women, one must have a clear understanding of two vital terms, power and authority, with power being defined as the ability to enact change and authority being defined as power to change or control situations.⁴⁰ The patriarchal system is a contributor to domestic violence. Carolyn Akua L. McCrary confirms this in, *Intimate Violence Against*

³⁸ Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 2.

³⁹ Lisa Wilson Davison, *Preaching the Women of the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006), 15.

⁴⁰ Davison, 15.

Black Women and Internalize Shame: A Womanist Pastoral Counseling Perspective, where she notes that “two such ideologies and social structures that have been internalized by Black females and males, negatively impacting the lives of Black girls and women, are patriarchy and racism – more specifically male supremacy and white supremacy.”⁴¹ Thus, African American males still seek to dominate and control African American women by any means such as domination, manipulation and/or intimidation.

April DeConick, in *Holy Misogyny*, theorizes that women were present and active historically; however, their authentic story has elapsed and is nowhere to be found in the Church’s main narrative.⁴² DeConick writes:

Even more dismaying is the evidence that the authentic memories of women in the early church were intentionally replaced with misogynist narratives that grew out of misogynist interpretations of events and selected scriptures. But the most dismaying is the fact that the misogynist narrative was made *sacred* or *holy*, so it rather than the authentic narrative became Christianity’s truth. A bogus, yet sacralized, representation of our past has been used to control and subject half of the Christian population to the other half, affecting the real lives of men and women at the altar and in the bedroom for 2,000 years.⁴³

DeConick noted that “the male body was the standard body in the ancient world and that it was taken for granted that the woman’s body was a pitiful body, an undesirable body caught between the station of man and beast.”⁴⁴ According to Aristotle, the female body was “a deformed male.”⁴⁵ This attitude and way of thinking was ingrained in the Jews and incorporated in an ancient Jewish prayer which was recited daily: “Blessed are you

⁴¹ McCrary, 23.

⁴² April D. DeConick, *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter* (New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 153.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

who did not make me a Gentile, a woman or a boar.”⁴⁶ I reject this antiquated form of thinking for indeed I am formed in the image of God; therefore, there is nothing deformed or substandard about my body. Similarly to my belief, Ignatius of Antioch taught respect for women. Ignatius of Antioch communicated that “it is fitting therefore to love those that were the authors of our birth (but only in the Lord), in as much as a man can produce no children without a woman. It is right, therefore, that we should honor those who have had a part in giving us birth.”⁴⁷ However, Ignatius of Antioch’s teaching was not adopted by society as a whole.

Historically, domestic violence “can be traced back to 753 B.C. when, during the reign of Romulus in Rome, wife beating was accepted and condoned under the Laws of Chastisement. These laws permitted the husband to beat his wife with a rod or switch as long as its circumference was no greater than the girth of the base of the man’s right thumb.”⁴⁸ Condoning wife beating is deplorable under any circumstances. Women were not created to be beaten. The state of Alabama was at the forefront of changing the law for wife beating. Pivotal “in a landmark Alabama case in 1871, a court found that a husband did not have the right to physically abuse his wife, even ‘moderately’ or with ‘restraint’. In *Fulgham v. State*, the court ruled that a married woman deserved protection under the law. The ruling stated:

A rod which may be drawn through the wedding ring is now not deemed necessary to teach the wife her duty and subjection to the husband. The husband is therefore not justified or allowed by law to use such a weapon, or any other, for her moderate correction. The wife is not to be considered as the husband’s slave.

⁴⁶ DeConick, 148.

⁴⁷ Alexander Roberts, DD and James Donaldson, LL.D., eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 114.

⁴⁸ Diane Bradley, “The Beginning of Domestic Violence” Air Force Print News Today (October 2007), accessed May 23, 2013, http://www.dyess.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?if=123070712.

And the privilege, ancient though it be, to beat her with a stick, to pull her hair, choke her, spit in her face or kick her about the floor, or to inflict upon her like indignities, is not now acknowledged by our law.⁴⁹

A change in the law was significant; nonetheless, the change provided no legal remedy for the battered wife. In the early twentieth century, “any criminal proceedings against a wife batterer had to be initiated by the state; women could not sue their husbands. Instead, the criminal justice system set up a separate court system-the family court-to deal with domestic complaints.”⁵⁰ Setting up the family court was an attempt to appease women and not deal severely with the problem. The action of setting up a family court was metaphorically like applying a bandage to a hemorrhage. To worsen matters inappropriate guidance was provided. Guidance was provided to prevent divorce and “rather than punishing wife beaters, judges and social workers urged couples to reconcile. Assault in this context was viewed as an inappropriate expression of emotions; wives and husbands needed to learn how to rechannel those emotions.”⁵¹ Would the same guidance be given by these same judges and social workers, if they were the victims and suffered under the hands of abuse? I think not!

By 1962, laws were enacted to provide legal consequences for physical abuse; however, there was little change in enactment of the law. This is documented by the fact that in “Washington, D. C., 7,400 women filed official complaints and just two hundred arrest warrants were issued.”⁵² This action can be better defined, in the words of

⁴⁹ “The Abuse of Women – A Worldwide Issue – American Traditions,” *The Library Index*, accessed May 23, 2013, <http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/2031/Abuse-Women-Worldwide-Issues-American-Traditions/>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

Dr. Lavonia McIntyre, as “scratching the glass ceiling – progress with an imprint but not a dent.”⁵³ Battered women shelters have opened, nationally and local hot lines are available, and domestic violence is a crime; yet, “many women still feel helpless and trapped in abusive relationships, unable to tell others about their problems and unsure of where to seek and obtain help.”⁵⁴ Historically, while some things have changed, some things still remain the same. Jimmy Carter in, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power*, writes that:

a recent UNICEF survey among women ages fifteen to forty-nine revealed that ninety percent of wives in Afghanistan and Jordan, eighty-seven percent in Mali, eighty-six percent in Guinea and Timor-Leste, eighty-one percent in Laos, and eighty percent in Central African Republic believe that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.⁵⁵

With all of the changes listed, domestic violence is still increasing and expanding. The seed of misogyny had been planted, watered, fertilized and have reaped a harvest since many “holy” men transmit this embedded theology of misogyny to others from generation to generation. Further, females are still seen as inferior to men and women bodies still are not respected, with it still being a man’s belief that they can do what they wish with women bodies.

One could follow the news and see the evidence of daily abuse to females from clergy, political leaders, athletes, priests, fathers and significant others. In August 2012, a sixteen year old teenager from Steubenville, Ohio suffered a series of horrifying violations. While intoxicated and unconscious, she was raped by two football players

⁵³ Lavonia K. McIntyre, *Scratching the Stained Glass Ceiling: Inspiring Women through the Voices of Other Women*. Interdenominational Theological Center Dissertation 2013.

⁵⁴ “The Abuse of Women.”

⁵⁵ Jimmy Carter, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 143.

while onlookers took photos of the acts and posted them to social media, in an act which is called revictimization.⁵⁶ Catherine Woodiwiss penned, “not only did she suffer violations of her body, of her dignity, and of her privacy, she later suffered skepticism and blame from victim-shamers both online and in her community.”⁵⁷ Even more nauseating is the reaction of the clergy to this crime. Woodiwiss further penned that “when members of the clergy gathered in Steubenville for a prayer service, they urged those gathered to ‘bring unity to our community...and show we are a better place,’ through ‘self-reflection and prayer,’”⁵⁸ but failed to directly condemn the rape as a crime. How members of the clergy can blatantly and publically ignore the fact that this female’s body was abused, affirms the facts noted throughout my research.

Why were the clergy not speaking out against this traumatic violation? Social media, television, video games, movies and music are filled with violence against women, depicting degrading lyrics and scenes. Violence against women has become accepted behavior. The degrading mentality has infiltrated society from our homes to our churches. The unconscious acceptance had been arranged in a pyramid with God being the pinnacle, man ruling and woman being submissive. There is no equality. The shame experienced from being abused is lasting. Catherine Woodiwiss suggests, “In the dirty

⁵⁶ Steve Almasy, “Two Teens Found Guilty in Steubenville Rape Case,” CNN Justice, March 17, 2013, accessed May 17, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/03/17/justice/ohio-steubenville-case/index.html>.

⁵⁷ Catherine Woodiwiss, “‘I Believe You:’ The Silence and the Shame of Sexual Violence in Church,” God’s Politics Blog Sojourners, entry posted May 3, 2013, accessed May 17, 2013, <http://sojo.net/blogs/2013/05/03/i-believe-you-silence-and-shame-sexual-violence-church.html>.

⁵⁸ Woodiwiss.

swampland of human sexuality, sexual violence – rape, abuse, and the behaviors that lead there – remains the darkest, most shameful stain.”⁵⁹

More recently, there have been a series of disclosure regarding domestic violence involving National Football League players and their spouses, girlfriends and significant others, to include, but not limited to Ray Rice, Adrian Peterson, Jonathan Dwyer and Greg Hardy. An article in *US Sports* revealed that although these four aforementioned players are currently suspended from playing football, there are eleven players who are also perpetrators of domestic violence and still allowed to play football. “Eleven more players who have been arrested on domestic violence charges since 2005 could still play in the NFL this week.”⁶⁰ What kind of message does that send to victims? Could this possible be the reason for the continued silence on domestic violence? Marie Fortune in her blog entitled, “Getting It Right? Part 2: Keep Trying,” stated that “the silence in our faith community is even louder than the silence in the NFL. In 2014, there is no excuse for this.”⁶¹

Silence has been the norm to addressing domestic violence; yet when one speaks, we must be careful in how we address the issue, and take special care to articulate our views in such a way that our voice is helpful instead of harmful. Todd Akin, a former U.S. Representative, was completely arrogant, rude, providing degrading, insensitive, and inappropriate comments on being rape. Akin substantiates the fertilized seed of

⁵⁹ Woodiwiss.

⁶⁰ Tom Sheen, “Domestic Violence in the NFL,” *U S Sport*, September 18, 2014, 1, accessed September 28, 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/us-sport/national-football-league/domestic-violence-in-the-nfl-four-players-are-currently-suspended-but-11-more-with-previous-charges-will-be-able-to-play-this-weekend-9740949.html>.

⁶¹ Marie Fortune, “Getting It Right? Part 2: Keep Trying,” *Marie's Blog, Faith Trust institute*, September 24, 2014, accessed September 28, 2014, <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/blog>.

misogynist and patriarchal thinking in the twenty-first century. Woodiwiss agrees and states,

Todd Akin's imbecilic comment last August that when raped, women's body have 'ways to just shut that whole thing down' revealed his deep misunderstanding of women's anatomy and a tone-deafness to the trauma of rape. As a former divinity student from a theological seminary in the Presbyterian tradition, his statements also shed light on a particularly potent combination of male-centric theology, patriarchal culture, and a fixation on prudishness.⁶²

The challenge for the church is to break the silence and provide ministry that address and help eradicate domestic violence. Those of us who have experienced domestic violence can be liberated by knowing that God is with us and that it is not God's desire for us to be abused. How we transform from this knowledge is strictly up to us and the church has a responsibility to help survivors in this transformation.

Theological Foundation

Survivors of domestic violence often experience guilt and shame after ending an abusive relationship or marriage. Meg Kennedy Dugan and Roger R. Hock posit in, *It's My Life Now* that "all survivors of relationship abuse have endured many painful traumatic events and most must continue to deal with the effects of these traumas after freeing themselves of their unhealthy relationships."⁶³ Furthermore, Edward S. Kubany and Mari McCaig in *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women*, state that "among 168 women in support groups for battered women, only six indicated they had no guilt related to the abuse (Kubany et al. 1996). Half of the 162 remaining women reported moderate or greater abuse-related guilt, and almost one in

⁶² Woodiwiss.

⁶³ Dugan & Hock, 72.

four reported considerable or greater guilt related to their victimization.”⁶⁴ These statistics confirmed that guilt and shame are manifested in the lives of survivors of domestic violence. Similarly, Andrew Sung Park documents that “the victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and crime particularly undergo the shame of humiliation. As people are physically abused and violated, they feel powerless, mortified, and full of shame.”⁶⁵ Feelings of guilt and shame, therefore, are evident in the lives of survivors of domestic violence. Jan Fable, in an article entitled “Shame,” reveals that “the basic nature of chronic, or excessive, shame is that the shamed person believes, at some level that she – or – he should not exist, that she is worthless, defective and an empty human being. This shame is debilitating, toxic and highly destructive. Shame is a spiritual crisis at the very core of one’s being.”⁶⁶ Survivors of domestic violence feel that they are unlovable and flawed, feelings that result from verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.

Another reference to this belief that there is a spiritual crisis of shame is also documented by Ronald Potter-Efron and Patricia Potter-Efron, in *Letting Go of Shame: Understanding How Shame Affects Your Life*. In the text, they state that “a shamed person also suffers a spiritual crisis in which she feels less than human and cut off from others as well as her Higher Power.”⁶⁷ Survivors of domestic violence feel detached from God. In sharing her story in Al Miles’ *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*,

⁶⁴ Mari McCaig MSW and Edward S. Kubany PhD ABPP, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: a Workbook for Women (new Harbinger Self-Help Workbook)* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2004), 97.

⁶⁵ Park, 40.

⁶⁶ Jan Fable, “Shame,” Forhealing.org, December 29, 2013, accessed December 29, 2013, <http://www.forhealing.org/shame.html>.

⁶⁷ Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron, 17.

one survivor writes “it’s been difficult to reach God.”⁶⁸ Having been abused by two husbands, this survivor felt that God had abandoned her. John Bradshaw, in *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, identifies “toxic shame as spiritual bankruptcy. ‘The kingdom of heaven is within,’ says the Scripture. Toxic shame looks to the outside for happiness and validation, since the inside is flawed and defective.”⁶⁹ Fortunately, toxic shame is not eternal and change in the way that survivors of domestic violence view themselves can occur. Bradshaw writes “the good news is you can recover, uncover and discover your true self and your personal power. But you must be willing to come out of hiding and embrace your toxic shame.”⁷⁰ Shame, then, cannot be healed in isolation. Walter Fluker stated in a lecture at McCormick Theological Seminary that “the only cure for shame is compassion and community.”⁷¹ Thus, it is the community of the church and survivors of domestic violence who must show compassion in helping others to begin the process of healing their shame.

How might survivors of domestic violence know that God is concerned about alleviating the pain of guilt and shame that they endure? How does God feel about the self-worth of survivors of domestic violence? The theological section will address the ministry issue utilizing liberation, feminist and womanist theology. It is from these lenses—liberation, feminist and womanist theologies—that survivors of domestic violence must view God. Survivors of domestic violence must come to fully understand that they were created in the image of God as documented in Genesis 1:26-27,

⁶⁸ Miles, 85.

⁶⁹ John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You* (Deerfield Beach, FL: HCI, 1988), 42.

⁷⁰ Bradshaw, 28.

⁷¹ Fluker.

Then God said, ‘let us make humankind’ in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.⁷²

Thus, there is equality amongst male and female. Reverend Al Miles postulates in

Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know, “we find that the Bible actually teaches equality between intimate partners.”⁷³ While many abusers utilize the Genesis 2:18-25 story where woman is taken from the rib of man, survivors of domestic violence need to know that God created them not as inferior to man but as equals. Miles further demonstrates that,

In his exegetical work on Genesis in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Terence E. Fretheim writes, ‘that both male and female are so created means that the female images the divine as much as the male’. In the second account of the creation of woman (Genesis 2:18-25) one should not infer male superiority/female inferiority. Fretheim states: ‘For the woman to be called ‘helper’ - a word used by both God and the narrator – carries no implications regarding the status of the one who helps; indeed, God is often called the helper of human beings’ (Psalm 121:1-2)⁷⁴

Who is God to survivors of domestic violence? James Cone in his book, *God of the Oppressed*, writes “to affirm that liberation is an expression of the image of God is to say not only who God is but also who I am and who my people are. Liberation is knowledge of self; it is a vocation to affirm who I am created to be.”⁷⁵ Thus, liberation is transformation. Survivors of domestic violence must alter their thinking and behavior to alleviate feelings of guilt and shame. They must know God as a God who is on their side for healing and releasing of oppression.

⁷² Genesis 1:26-27 (NRSV)

⁷³ Miles, 32.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 32-33.

⁷⁵ James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 134.

Furthermore, since I believe that liberation theology's goal is equality – equality that refutes the various isms (racism, sexism, classism, genderism, etc.), I invite Elizabeth Cady Stanton into this dialogue as she reflects, from a feminist perspective, on God. Stanton, in *The Woman's Bible*, articulates “God create man in his own image, male and female. Thus Scripture, as well as science and philosophy, declares the eternity and equality of sex.”⁷⁶ Stanton further articulates that Genesis 1:26-27,

Plainly show the simultaneous creation of man and woman, and their equal importance in the development of the race. All those theories based on the assumption that man was prior in the creation, have no foundation in Scripture. As to woman's subjection, on which both the canon and the civil law delight to dwell, it is important to note that equal dominion is given to woman over every living thing, but not one word is said giving man dominion over woman.⁷⁷

Survivors of domestic violence must negate the male headship/female submission embedded theology that most pastors preach and teach. This theology defines male as head of household and thus privilege to do with females as they please—even to abuse them—while females are obligated to submit to their husbands. Survivors of domestic violence must switch their theology to deliberative and disagree with male headship/female submission model. One survivor of domestic violence has testified that she stayed in abusive relationships far too long “believing the abuse was caused by not submitting fully to her husband's authority.”⁷⁸ It is this kind of thinking that must be changed.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible: A Classic Feminist Perspective* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003), 14-15.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁸ Miles, 31.

Cone further suggests that “the key to black theology is its refusal to embrace any concept of God which makes black suffering the will of God.”⁷⁹ The God personified in Cone’s work is a God of Liberation. It is never God’s will for survivors of domestic violence to remain in bondage to guilt and shame.

Andrew Parks posits,

In his hometown, Nazareth, Jesus declared the purpose of his mission: to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of God’s favor (Luke 4:18-19). He knew the agony of the downtrodden at that time. There were many who sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death (Matthew 4:16). Jesus diagnosed his time and people and came up with the goal of his ministry, which was to release the downtrodden from their bondage.⁸⁰

The feelings of brokenness and being in captivity to guilt and shame are exhibited by survivors of domestic violence. Many survivors exemplify thought patterns of doing something wrong, being a bad person or feelings of unworthiness which continues to cause hurt and pain after the abusive relationship has ended. Sadly, as Ty Colbert notes in *Why Do I Feel Guilty When I’ve Done Nothing Wrong?*, “there are churches and ministers who preach that all a hurting individual needs to do is pray and have faith.”⁸¹ Prayer is powerful; yet healing of guilt and shame requires articulation in a safe community which should be our place of worship. Colbert further notes that “healing shame requires an outside source of affirmation and unconditional love. Outside sources can also include a spouse, a counselor, friends, support groups, a good working

⁷⁹ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 124.

⁸⁰ Park, 22.

⁸¹ Colbert, 103.

environment and God.”⁸² It is vital for survivors of domestic violence to know that the guilt and shame that they experience is not their fault and should be directed to the appropriate place: the perpetrators.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, in *A Theology of Liberation*, specifies that “liberation emphasizes that human beings transform themselves by conquering their liberty throughout their existence and their history.”⁸³ Gutiérrez asserts that God is manifested in Liberation Theology as a God whose self-revelation begins with the mission of liberation. Gutiérrez argues that to know God is to do justice.⁸⁴ God is a God of Justice. Gutiérrez says that “the God of Biblical revelation is known through inter-human justice. When justice does not exist, God is not known; God is absent.”⁸⁵ The church can no longer remain silent on the issue of domestic violence and simultaneously proclaim that they are representing a God of Justice. It refutes the message. If we believe that God is a God of justice then we must put our belief to action.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church has at its core social activism. The Social Creed of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church states:

We believe that the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is a part of the body of Christ, and that it must express itself in the world in the light of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us many things both by word and example – to be concerned for the welfare and the well-being of others, to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be concerned for justice. For the Church to be silent in the face of need, injustice, and exploitation is to deny the Lord of the Church.⁸⁶

⁸² Colbert, 58.

⁸³ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), xiv.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁸⁶ Lawrence L. Reddick III, *The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church* (Memphis, TN: The CME Publishing House, 2010), 34-38.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church states that it stands for social justice and our organization was founded upon social justice principles; yet, in most cases, its local denominational churches lack support ministries for survivors of domestic violence that would address the issues of guilt and shame. Injustice has been inflicted on survivors of domestic violence and the imperative is for churches to rise up now, not tomorrow, shattering the silence and providing resources to assist survivors move beyond the pain, guilt and shame.

Jacquelyn Grant in her article, *Womanist Theology in North America* states that “Womanist Theology is a theological perspective that emerges out of the experiences of Black women.”⁸⁷ Grant further states that “when Black women say that God is on the side of the oppressed, we mean that God is in solidarity with the struggles of those on the underside of humanity.”⁸⁸ Many survivors of domestic violence struggle with the emotional bondage of guilt and shame having lived on the underside of humanity. Domestic violence is inhumane. We have an assurance that God is on our side as survivors of domestic violence because domestic violence is a sin. We must teach this womanist theology to survivors of domestic violence as a mean of liberation.

In, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, Deloris Williams describes,

Womanist theology as a prophetic voice reminding African-American denominational churches of their mission to seek justice and voice for all their people, of which Black women are the overwhelming majority of their congregations. Yet this prophetic voice is concerned about the well-being of the entire African-American community, female and male, adults and children.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Jacquelyn Grant, “Womanist Theology in North America”, *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 16, no. 1-2 (Fall-Spring 1988-1989), 285.

⁸⁸ Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 209.

⁸⁹ Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), xii-xiv.

Although Williams is speaking about the African-American community, the prophetic voice of all churches must remember its mission of justice and for all survivors of domestic violence. Though this project demographically will be comprised of women survivors of domestic violence who experience guilt and shame; there are also male survivors of domestic violence who also have aftereffects of guilt and shame relevant to domestic violence, whose demographic is not a component of this research.

In turn, in her book, *Battered African American Women: A Study of Gender Entrapment*, Sharon Ellis Davis states that, “domestic violence in African American communities is a crucial issue for the church. African American families are in crisis, and it is imperative that African American churches deal with the issue of domestic violence in African American communities.”⁹⁰ While this project provides support within the African-American community, the aftereffects of guilt and shame in all communities must be addressed. As pastors and clergy, we must act now. It is imperative that the church offer space for giving voice to survivors of domestic violence to dialog and process the aftereffects of guilt and shame relevant to domestic violence.

Howard Fradkin substantiates in his book, *Joining Forces: Empowering Male Survivors to Thrive*, that “most often, men who are victimized feel immense shame afterward; after all, as a man, you are never ‘supposed’ to be a victim. You most likely learned that you are supposed to be in control at all times, and victimization is a sign that you did not control your body.”⁹¹ It is difficult to control your body when being abused. After all, domestic violence is about power and control. However, you can make a

⁹⁰ Davis, *Battered African American Women*, 99.

⁹¹ Fradkin, xx.

decision to address the aftereffects of guilt and shame once you have left the abusive relationship.

Cheryl Kirk-Duggan posits in, *Violence and Theology*, “before we can ever change anything with the preponderance of violence, we must admit that it exists. We must name it and claim our participation before we can transform violence and create a better world.”⁹² It is imperative to name the aftereffects of guilt and shame of survivors of domestic violence, openly address those issues and stop pretending that they do not exist. Bell Hooks, in *Sisters of the Yam*, states that “there is no healing in silence.”⁹³

Hooks writes,

In Alice Walker’s novel *The Color Purple*, Celie, the black heroine, only begins to recover from her traumatic experiences of incest/rape, domestic violence, and marital rape when she is able to tell her story, to be open and honest. Reading fictional narratives where black female characters break through silences to speak the truth of their lives, to give testimony, has helped individual black women take the risk to openly share painful experiences. We see examples of such courageous testimony in *The Black Women’s Health Book*. Yet many black readers of Alice Walker’s fiction were angered by Celie’s story. They sought to ‘punish’ Walker by denouncing the work, suggesting it represented a betrayal of blackness. If this is the way folks respond to fiction, we can imagine then how much harder it is for black women to actually speak honestly in daily life about their real traumatic experiences. And yet there is no healing in silence.⁹⁴

There are many more references that document the belief of healing through storytelling. Of a particular note, Teresa E. Snorton’s article, “What About All Those Angry Black Women?” in *Women Out of Order*, highlights theologian Evelyn Parker’s challenge to the black church:

In light of the realities of racism, sexism, and classism, if the church – in which women and girls have long been the majority – is to be a relevant institution, then

⁹² Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, *Violence and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 82.

⁹³ Hooks, 16.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

the church must discern ways to let girls tell their stories and receive God's miraculous healing in the process.⁹⁵

Snorton further articulates that "when working with African-American women, we must be willing to hear their stories, to see their anger, to assist them in naming the anger, and to walk with them through the anger as a means of empowerment and a vehicle for growth."⁹⁶

In conclusion, this project demographically will be composed of African-Americans; however, survivors of domestic violence are composed of all ethnicity and races. Al Miles in *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs To Know*, interviewed "fifty-two survivors of domestic violence who were African-American, Caucasian, Chinese, Filipina, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean, Native Hawaiian, Native American and Samoan."⁹⁷ Domestic violence is an epidemic. "The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that while 3,200 servicemen were killed in battle between 2000 and 2006, there were 10,600 domestic homicides in the United States, 85 percent of these victims were women."⁹⁸

Similarly, Miles writes, "domestic violence ranks as the number one public health problem for women in America, and yet those of the cloth prefer to look the other way."⁹⁹ Domestic violence ranks terribly high as a health problem, yet the institution that is supposed to be so liberating actually ignores the problem. As Martin Luther King, Jr.,

⁹⁵ Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, Teresa Snorton, and editors, *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 217.

⁹⁶ Stevenson-Moessner, 217.

⁹⁷ Miles, 77-78.

⁹⁸ Carter, 143.

⁹⁹ Miles, 5.

penned in his twenty-one page letter from the Birmingham Jail, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”¹⁰⁰ Injustice for survivors of domestic violence in the African-American community is also a threat to survivors in the Caucasian, Chinese, Filipina, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean, Native Hawaiian, Native American and Samoan communities. Failure to address the after effects of guilt and shame in the African-American community is a threat to the failure to address the after effects of guilt and shame in the Caucasian, Chinese, Filipina, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean, Native Hawaiian, Native American and Samoan communities, as well.

As a survivor of domestic violence, it was in peer focus group setting with womanist theologian Dr. Jacquelyn Grant and Program Administrator, Dr. Itahari Toure where I, then a Black Women in Leadership Fellow at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta Georgia, experienced positive results towards healing of guilt and shame. Healing has been an ongoing process; nonetheless, each time I share my story, it is therapeutic.

Michelle Oberwise Lacock and Carol Lakota Eastin in an essay entitled, “*We Hold Our Stories in Blankets*,” portrays that,

The therapeutic process includes taking an inventory of what we carry with us, deciding what we will keep, choosing what we wish to abandon and what we might need to add to our bundle that might give us renewed strength and hope. Letting go is not forgetting. It is reframing...reinterpreting the events. We cannot change what happened to us in the past, but we can change what it means to us.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ali Ali-Dinar, “Letter from the Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.],” African Studies Center University of Pennsylvania, December 30, 2013, accessed December 30, 2013, http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

¹⁰¹ Stevenson-Moessner, 107.

Let the reframing of guilt and shame with survivors of domestic violence begin and let it begin in the church! The methodology used in reframing guilt and shame for women survivors of domestic violence is storytelling.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The project, *For Love of Justice: Exploration of Guilt and Shame Associated with Domestic Violence and Role of the Church*, takes place at Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (hereinafter referred to as Rock Star) in Fitzgerald, Georgia. Rock Star, where I serve as senior pastor, is one of 296 Christian Methodist Episcopal churches in the state of Georgia. The project involves the participation of five survivors of domestic violence and can be adapted for use worldwide.

Hypothesis

One of the most crucial times for survivors of domestic violence occurs after the abusive relationship has ended. Among the many emotions experienced by survivors are guilt and shame, the foci of this project. The hypothesis for this project is that survivors of domestic violence can be supported in the local church and resourced for conquering the emotions of guilt and shame, with a model that advocates storytelling. Sessions were hosted in a specially designated space within the local church that was conducive to sharing the aftereffects of guilt and shame.

The desired results included a reframing of the manner in which survivors of domestic violence thought about themselves and a transferring of the experiences of guilt and shame to the appropriate place. Additionally, the desired outcomes were also for

members of the peer focus group to name ‘guilt’ and ‘shame’ as two aftereffects of their experienced domestic violence, for them to work through these emotions by sharing their stories thus enabling them to embark upon the journey of healing those emotions, and for them to gain a new positive self-image and boost their self-esteem while peeling off the layers of guilt and shame.

Research Design

This qualitative study employs ethnographic methods of focus groups, observations and surveys. The focus group is intended to be composed of five survivors of domestic violence, for participation in six sessions that are each two hours in duration. There will be a session evaluation with each focus group participant, which will be used in fine-tuning the final design of the model for future use. The findings will aid the implementation of domestic violence support ministries for use by churches.

Measurement

There were two proposed concepts to be measured in this study: guilt and shame of domestic violence survivors. Both concepts were measured utilizing a continuum model comprised of pre-test, observations, and post-test tools to assess the degree of guilt and shame that each participant had at the onset of group versus the degree at the end of the six sessions. The pre-test and post-test continuum tools served as a means for naming the degree of guilt and shame experienced by survivors of domestic violence at two different stages. Levels on the continuum ranged from zero to ten with levels represented as follows: zero being healed; one to four, mild affect; five to seven, moderate affect; and eight to ten, extreme affect. In addition, a pre-survey and post-survey were

administered to ascertain the presence of guilt and shame in each participant. Through the pre-survey, I anticipated finding that the women were suffering with guilt and shame as a result of surviving domestic violence, making them viable participants for the study.

Instrumentation

During the period of February 15, 2014 – February 20, 2014, I met with a graphic designer to develop and create postcards for the project. Displayed in Appendix F, the final postcard was approved on February 20, 2014. Following the postcard's approval on February 20, 2014, postcards were printed and then distributed in the bathrooms and foyers of Rock Star, other local churches, beauty salons, a bank and a fitness center. The distribution of the postcards served as a recruitment tool to solicit the interest of female domestic violence survivors, for participation in the focus group, where they would share their stories in an effort to initiate healing of the aftereffects of the guilt and shame caused by their abuse.

Between February 20, 2014 and March 8, 2014, I received telephone calls from interested candidates, who had seen the postcards and were calling with inquiries about the focus group. By March 8, 2014, five women had enrolled for the upcoming sessions. In the weeks following, time was spent preparing for the group sessions, and the pre and posttest continuum tools were completed.

The remaining three weeks were spent collaborating with Context and Professional Associates to plan the execution of the six sessions. Collaboration time was spent selecting music for each session, purchasing candles, mirrors, folders, masks, and other materials to be used each session. During this time, facilitators were also scheduled

for the sessions. For example, one of the Professional Associates agreed to facilitate Session Five, which focused on self-esteem.

For the final session, a Mary Kay consultant was booked to provide a pampering session for the participants of the focus group. The Mary Kay Foundation was founded in 1996 with a commitment to “ending the epidemic of domestic violence by providing grants to women’s shelters and supporting community outreach programs.”¹ Their advocacy work and commitment to serving domestic violence survivors influenced my decision to partner with a Mary Kay consultant for this project.

A model was solidified for use with the peer focus group. This model will be the focus of Chapter Five: Field Experience.

¹ “The Mary Kay Foundation: A Legacy of Love,” The Mary Kay Foundation, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.marykayfoundation.org/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Five women responded to the challenge and on March 22, 2014 the first focus group session was held at Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. As the participants arrived, the room was filled with candles burning, music playing, and purple balloons. It was important to ensure that the environment was warm and embracing in order to set the atmosphere and make each participant feel welcome. The musical selection that played as they entered was “Hero” by Mariah Carey. This song was chosen to encourage them, letting them know that taking the first step towards healing made them a hero, and the intent of the sessions was inner healing. The chairs were arranged in circular permutation to emphasize the fact that all of us were equal. A table was set in the left corner of the room which had different colored stones displayed on them. The stone colors were black, green, blue, red, purple, and clear. The stones would be utilized in a later segment of the first session. Attending the session were participants from both Baptist and Methodist denominations, and only two participants from the host church.

As the focus group participants arrived, they were greeted with a warm embrace and given time to mingle with one another briefly before the 10:00 a.m. session began. The session began promptly at 10:00 a.m. with prayer and welcome. The focus group participants were then informed of my research, hypothesis and my selection of this model for analysis. They were also informed that this model would be included in my

dissertation. After the introduction, folders were disseminated which included material for the session. The focus group participants were asked to choose a number that would be used to identify them in analysis of the data since no names would be utilized. After choosing their number, focus group participants were asked to complete the confidentiality agreement, demographic information and pre-test continuum. As they completed the three forms, soft music played in the background. The musical selection was comprised of healing therapeutic music with the sounds of music and water. The selection was chosen to capture a tranquil, calming environment.

The pre-test continuum revealed the degree of guilt and shame by each focus group participant, ranging on a scale of zero to ten, with zero being healed and ten being extreme feelings of guilt and shame. The following table represents the results of the pre-test continuum. As shown in table below, the table reveals the degree of guilt and shame current in the lives of the survivors of domestic violence participants. Three of the five women survivor participants entered the focus group acknowledging that they were experiencing guilt and shame as a result of surviving domestic violence.

Table 1. Pre-Test Continuum Results

Focus Group Participant	Guilt	Shame
#7	9	8
#14	0	0
#20	3	3
#55	0	0
#3286	5	6

After a brief amount of time had passed, we began introducing ourselves by answering three questions: *Who are you? How are you feeling? Why are you here?* Each focus group participant was to begin their introduction stating who they were by utilizing the first letter of their first name and the first letter of their last name to describe them. For example, the first letter of my name is “C” and the first letter of my last name is “C”; therefore, I introduced myself as Carolyn Carlisle, Classy and Confident. I was amazed at the answers and names provided.

The stones previously mentioned were used in describing what each focus group participant was feeling. We gathered around the table in the corner where the stones were displayed and each focus group participant took a turn picking a stone and elaborating on current feelings. The intention of this exercise was to help focus group participants relax and to hear that others might be experiencing similar feelings and thus, they were not alone. Three focus group participants chose clear stones stating that they felt redeemed; wanted to be transparent; and felt clean. One focus group participant chose green stating that she felt peaceful. The last focus group participant chose blue stating it reminded her of water, the ocean and she was feeling calm.

As we return to our seats, we began the exercise of explaining why we were in attendance. I began this exercise by sharing first. This was important because it is my belief that one never ask another to do what they are not willing to do themselves. After each focus group participant shared their reason for attending, they was presented with a purple balloon and told that they were beautiful. This was a way of affirming their worth and negating all the negativity that still resided within. At the conclusion of this exercise, time was allotted for individual assessment of the session. Session ended with prayer.

Session Two

Session Two began on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. The room was again filled with lit candles and music played as the focus group participants arrived. We began the session with prayer, welcome, and an explanation for the purpose of the group. Folders were then distributed. Each focus group participant was given the opportunity to verbally check in and articulate their current feelings, express feelings about the last session and to share any other pertinent information. Journals were then given to each focus group participant.

The term 'guilt' was defined and the question of the day was revealed. Session Two question centered on "Why do I feel guilty about the domestic violence I experienced when I did nothing wrong?" Each of us took turns sharing our thoughts on the question and time was allotted for writing in our journals. Writing is another art used in the therapeutic process of sharing. This was important because many persons are able to write what they cannot adequately or willfully articulate. Most of the focus group participants welcomed the process of writing in their journals.

After a ten minute break, we examined, through role playing, the ways in which we misplace blame. For example, we looked at victim blaming language like "it's my fault," or "I provoked it." It was important to learn that there are no adequate reasons for abuse. We chose to evaluate the embedded psychological verbiage that we had encountered which postulated that we were to blame for the abuse. As we rejected the blame and began to transfer the blame to the appropriate place, an exercise was done whereby we wrote on strips of paper all the negative, blameful accusations that had been

hurdled at us. The strips of paper were then folded and placed in a garbage can. We gathered outside and burned the trash shouting, “Never again!” We agreed that we would never again allow someone else to place the blame on us for things that were not our fault. This portion of the session ended tearfully but prepared us for the next portion of the session.

With the remaining time in Session Two, we wrote in our journals with three open ended sentences. The sentences were: 1) I acknowledge that the abuse was not my fault. 2) I should not feel guilty because...; and 3) In order to move forward, I need.... Time elapsed without completing this portion of the exercise. The focus group participants were asked to finish this portion prior to returning for the next session. Session Two closed with prayer and reflection from one of the focus group participant.

Session Three

Three weeks later on Saturday, April 19, 2014, the focus group participants met again. This day began with focus group participants arriving to a room scented with vanilla candles and music playing in the background. After prayer and dissemination of folders, the focus group participants eagerly responded to the homework assignment of writing in journals. Each person articulated their feelings and what writing had meant to them.

We began a segment of Session Three discussing the term shame. Shame was defined as a negative social emotion. Time was then allotted for writing in journals, focusing on the following questions: Do you feel shamed about what happened to you? Have you ever experienced: Isolation? Felt all alone? Low Self-Esteem? Hopeless?

Unworthy of love? In your experience of feeling shame, did you feel cut off from God?

The purpose of these questions was for survivors to name shaming experiences as a result of domestic violence and to journal their feelings about their connection with God during and after the abuse. It is important for healing to be able to express the feelings and causes of shame instead of repressing them. Many times we are able to write what we cannot verbally articulate, at first. Writing in the journals was important to bring the feelings to surface with the final intent being able to share them with the group. As we begin to heal and build a new life for ourselves, we must be able to confront those emotions of guilt and shame. It is also important to assess where we are spiritually and what role the church plays in our healing. After journal writing, a ten minute break was taken, with soft music playing in the background. A selection of jazz music had been selected for the break; however, one of the focus group participants asked if I could play, "Break Every Chain," by Tasha Cobb. It was interesting to note that the participant came equipped with the compact disc. The focus group participant stated that she believed that God would help her to heal from guilt and shame, thus breaking the chain or hold that guilt and shame had on her. She further stated that guilt and shame had chained her for years.

During the break, as focus group participants mingled and listened to the song selection of "Break Every Chain," distribution of masks and the poem, "We Wear The Mask," by Paul Laurence Dunbar took place. The items were placed in each focus group participant's chair. After returning from the break, one focus group participant was asked to read the poem audibly. Afterwards, focus group participants were directed to place the mask over their faces and for the next five minutes to focus on one incident that caused

them to feel ashamed. When the time period had elapsed, each focus group participant shared their incident, what they felt and heard. This exercise was important because I wanted to emphasize that using the senses, in this case, feeling and hearing, can be empowering for healing.

As we continued with the unmasking of shame which included exposing the hidden truth about our shame by naming shameful feelings and events that still disturbed us, the focus group participants were again encouraged to journal. After journaling, positive affirmations were written then spoken audibly. A handout was distributed which had spaces for writing their “I AM” affirmations. The instruction example provided was “I am beautiful.” At that point, the focus group participants were encouraged to write their ten affirmations. This exercise was chosen to negate all the negative affirmations that the survivors of domestic violence had previously internalized. The goal was to reverse past negative affirmations with positive affirmations. Two song sources that were used during this time were “I Am What God Says I Am,” by Maurette Brown-Clark and “I Am Factor,” by Donald Lawrence. The lyrics of both songs provided positive affirmations. Upon closing this session, focus group participants were challenged to commit to repeat positive affirmations about themselves daily. This serves as a continuous way of internalizing positive affirmations to help negate those previous negative affirmations. Applying the arts in healing are an integral part of this model and thus the focus group participants were encouraged to compose a song, dance, or poem that spoke specifically to them expressing their feelings about their new emerging self-image. The session was closed in prayer. Session four will be the pivotal part of the model, which is story sharing by each participant.

Session Four

An interval of two weeks had elapsed since Session Three, and I could sense nervous energy in the room. The focus group participants were anxious about sharing. The session began with prayer. In an effort to ease the tension and take control over the atmosphere, I reiterated how my research had shown that storytelling is vital for healing and informed the group that I would begin first by sharing my story. It was important because the group needed to understand that what I was asking of them, I was willing to do myself. The sharing of stories began with me. There was plenty of Kleenex available for the tears that flowed on this day. After sharing of my story, focus group participants were given the opportunity to engage in dialog. Music was then played for ten minutes. The sharing of stories for the remainder of the session was done in voluntary order. All focus group participants share their stories in their own way, some slowly, some intermingled with tears. Intertwined between stories was music. Of all the sessions, Session Four was the most emotional. Questions were seldom raised in this session; however, there were many hugs and positive affirmations provided to focus group participants after they shared. We ended the session enveloped in holding each other's hands, exhibiting our solidarity and support for one another and in prayer.

Session Five

Session Five was conducted by one of my Professional Associates. The Session was on self-esteem. After the focus group participants arrived, the Professional Associates lit candles and opened session with prayer. A handout entitled, "Loving the You God Created: Re-evaluating Self-Esteem," was presented to each focus group participant.

Mirrors had been purchased for this session and were distributed to focus group participants. Each focus group participant received two mirrors: one hand-held mirror and one mini mirror. The facilitator and focus group participants introduced themselves and the session began.

The first activity was centered on how we see ourselves. In order to evaluate yourself, it requires that you name what you see. The focus group participants were asked to take five minutes and look at themselves in the hand-held mirror. After the five minutes had elapsed, we were to draw a picture of ourselves which represented what we saw in the mirror. At the end of the time period, each focus group participant was invited to share their portrait and elaborate on its meaning. Fifty percent of the focus group participants saw negative attributes about themselves. An analysis was done on how we view ourselves in comparison to how God sees us. I observed as one of the participants emphasized her physical scars as she viewed herself in the mirror. Another participant articulated her weight as she viewed herself in the mirror and how her weight was always a topical issue with her immediate family. She saw her weight as a hindrance to being loved. God clearly sees us as children of God and loves each of us.

As Session Five continued, the topic of self-esteem was incorporated. The Professional Associate shared how our self-esteem has been shaped by the messages that we have received and internalized from others, shaped by our experiences, and shaped also from our self-talk. The Professional Associate stressed the fact that as children, we had no control over who influenced us; however, as adults we are now able to choose those with whom we associate and control our self-talk. In an effort to pursue new paths,

change the distorted views we have of ourselves, and see ourselves as God sees us, eleven self-talk declarations were presented. They are:

- Accept Yourself
- Thank God for Encouraging You
- Accept the Compliments of Others
- Release Past Negative Experiences and Focus on a Positive Future
- Live in God's Forgiveness
- Benefit from Mistakes
- Form Supportive, Positive Relationships
- Formulate Realistic Goals and Plans
- Identify Your Heart's Desires
- Plan for Success
- Celebrate Each Accomplishment¹

These declarations are to be continuously used in the ongoing healing for the women survivors of domestic violence.

Time passed quickly and the final exercise was another exercise utilizing mirrors. This exercise would begin in Session Five with the intentions of lasting for a minimum of forty days. In this final exercise, focus group participants were asked to look in the mirror and follow a four-step process. The steps are:

1. Say your name
2. Appreciate yourself for
 - a. Achievements (business, financial, educational, personal and emotional)

¹ Adrian C. Evans. *Loving the You God Created: Reevaluating Self-Esteem* (Mobile, AL, 2014), 2.

- b. Disciplines kept (exercise, meditation, prayers, eating well)
- c. Say, "I Love You!"
- d. Take it in and receive it; breathe²

The Professional Associate demonstrated the four-step process. Each focus group participant then performed the mirror exercise. The session ended with gifts bags presented to each focus group participant by the Professional Associate. The gift bags were filled with a "Woman of God" mini mirror, an empowering card, a pen with the word "Princess" inscribed, and a devotional book entitled, "Beloved Names of God." Session Five ended with prayer.

Session Six

Session six was conducted on May 24, 2014. As focus group participants arrived, lavender scent candles filled the room with music played in the background. The post-test continuum survey was completed. The results showed an improvement in the degree of guilt and shame after focus group participants completed six sessions. The results are outlined in Table two. As shown in Table two below, the degree of guilt and shame experienced by focus group participants decreased after completing six sessions. The results in the table indicated that the focus group participants benefited from the group sessions and that there was a realized benefit of decrease in the amount of guilt and shame they now felt. In essence, the focus group participants felt better about themselves and realized a boost in self-esteem.

² Evans, 4.

Table 2. Post-Test Continuum Results

Focus Group Participant	Guilt	Shame
#7	2	1
#14	not completed	not completed
#20	2	2
#55	not completed	not completed
#3286	3	3

The Session evaluation showed the need to continue group therapy and the appreciation for establishing the group. When asked the strength of the sessions, 100% of the respondents stated being able to verbally communicate what has been hidden in their lives in a judgment free environment.

When asked the weakness of the sessions, 100% identified none. When asked were the sessions beneficial, 100% of the respondents said yes. Only three of the respondents provided further comments to this question and they were as follows:

#7 responded that the sessions helped her to let go the pain, guilt and shame and to realize that it was not her fault.

#20 responded that the sessions helped her to see she was not alone in experiencing guilt and shame.

#3286 responded that she was forced to open up about situations that she had tried to make non-existent. The sessions allowed her to finally begin healing.

When asked if they would be willing to participate continuously in a peer focus group in the local church, 100% of the respondents said yes.

The Mary Kay consultant cancelled at the last minute due to life circumstances; however, Mary Kay products had already been purchased and gift baskets generated. The focus group participants were presented with baskets filled with Mary Kay products as a thank you gift for participating.

The focus group was successful in that it was held in a local church setting, allowing the women in the focus group to know that as an ambassador of God, I was not afraid to address the relevant issue of guilt and shame associated with surviving domestic violence. Although many churches in the area do not address the issue, having the focus group at the local church showed a willingness to break the silence on domestic violence and provide support to those women who have survived domestic violence. Secondly, the project was successful in that the degree of guilt and shame experienced by focus group participants changed after completing six sessions of focus group participation. The degree on the scale decreased 100% for all respondents, showing that the level of guilt and shame experienced at the onset was quite different at the end. Thirdly, the model of using storytelling as a tool for speaking out about the issues of abuse, experiences encountered, and addressing the issues of guilt and shame was rewarding and successful.

The same positive results of healing being initiated after telling one's story is also documented by women in Nancy Werking Poling's book, *Victim to Survivor*. Although the stories were not all shared in focus group settings, the women were able to begin healing after speaking out about their abuse and thus their stories became healing agents for others. The following excerpts from the women demonstrate the results:

Speaking out opened the door to healing, to love and compassion, and to mercy and forgiveness for myself and ultimately for others.³

³ Nancy Werking Poling, ed., *Victim to Survivor: Women Recovering from Clergy Sexual Abuse* (N/A: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2009), 21.

I speak out today because the silence and secrecy of abuse have taken the lives of victims who did not experience the support they wanted and needed in their journey toward healing.⁴

There is life after abuse, but I found it by going through it instead of around it, just as my counselor advised me. I had to face it and live with the ugly implications: being blamed, shamed, taunted, and teased. If I can find healing, most people can.⁵

I used to know God through the voice of a “man of God” and through his interpretation of scripture. I now know God in many other ways. I know God through my clients’ lives and their stories of suffering and healing...And I know God through the church’s willingness to seek justice.⁶

The accounts of these women stories were women recovering from clergy sexual abuse and all have aftereffects of guilt and shame, along with various other residual emotional burdens. Marie Fortune stated,

The miracle of these stories (and the hundreds more like them) is that these women are the church, the broken body of Christ seeking to be made whole through the courage to demand justice. In their pain, these women call upon the church to be the church, and they really expect those of us in the institutional church to rise to the occasion.⁷

In addition to the strengths noted by participants, there were clearly challenges to conducting the project. Two of the five women in the focus group who considered themselves already healed did not finish the entire six sessions. They dropped out of the group after session three. Their reasoning ranged from work schedule conflicts to attending funerals. However, one of the two focus group participants wanted to return for session six for the pampering session.

⁴ Poling, 38.

⁵ Ibid., 59.

⁶ Ibid., 119-120.

⁷ Ibid., ix.

Secondly, the three women previously identified in the congregation of Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church who admitted to being victims of domestic violence did not participate or show any interest in being a part of the focus group. I came to realize that everyone that has survived domestic violence is not ready to do the work that is necessary for healing.

On the other hand, the two focus group participants that participated from the host church are two different persons than those previously identified. This led me to surmise that there are many more within Rock Star Christian Methodist Episcopal Church who did not come forward. I question, in offering the space and allocating the times for sessions, what will drive survivors of domestic violence to the session to begin their healing?

I have risen to the occasion of addressing the aftereffects of domestic violence in the church. My research and analysis shows that there is a connection between sharing one's story of abuse in a nonjudgmental church setting to the degree of guilt and shame experienced at the onset and at the end of the sessions. The research substantiates my beliefs that the church is an appropriate place for addressing the relevant issues of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence.

Where do we go from here? The church where I pastor is just one of the many churches that need to establish ministries within for domestic violence survivors. The ministry of meeting in focus group to address the aftereffects of guilt and shame must be continued. The next phase will be addressed in my final chapter of reflection, summary, and conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I began this research exploring the fact that survivors of domestic violence leave abusive relationships with some degree of guilt and shame. Similarly, many of the survivors of domestic violence are faithful parishioners each week in some place of worship. While many of the survivors of domestic violence are parishioners in many different churches, mosques or synagogues, their issue—the aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence—is rarely addressed in their local place of worship. I further posited that the church’s failure to address domestic violence and the aftereffects of guilt and shame is an injustice. Thus, I contend that a model of utilizing liberation, feminist and womanist theologies in the context of the local church can change how survivors of domestic violence view themselves. Liberation theology speaks to changing things in society so that the conditions can be more humane and just with a core focus of males, racism and poverty. Feminist theology speaks to the needs of women—however, mostly European and white women. Still, womanist theology speaks to the liberation of all humankind. Of particular concern is the need to use these theological lenses of liberation, feminist and womanist theologies to develop models of ministry within the local church for survivors of domestic violence. Thus, I am indicting the church for its failure to provide social justice ministry to survivors of domestic violence. We must name, challenge, and change the ways that churches develop ministries to

ensure that the ministries are relevant for all those who worship within and for those who will later become a part of the church community. The model that was developed accomplishes that. While the church must also address the needs of both the abused and the abuser, this research was specifically focused on the guilt and shame experienced as a result of surviving domestic violence for African American women.

In Chapter One, I shared my personal story of being abused and how it impacted this ministry. Knowing firsthand the detriment of not addressing guilt and shame as a result of surviving domestic violence and its effect on making coherent decisions speaks greatly to the need of pastors and churches to speak up against domestic violence. I shared how failure to address my issues of guilt and shame as a result of surviving domestic violence left me with feelings of being flawed, unlovable, and underserving of real love, which was a contributor to me marrying the same abusive man twice. As a means of pedagogy, sermons and workshops should be preached and conducted in an ongoing manner. As a means of praxis, focus groups must be established in the local church for continuous support to survivors of domestic violence.

One might question the need for continuous focus group ministry or whether a one-time healing service can eradicate the guilt and shame associated with domestic violence. I disagree with a one-time healing service changing the degree of guilt and shame experience as a result of surviving domestic violence. The truth is that a one-time healing service is not sufficient to adequately heal. While healing may be initiated, I posit that there must be follow-up that comes through articulation and storytelling in a shared community. I have always believed that healing is an ongoing process.

Personally, I was affected by this project in that I became a stronger, more confident person. I, too, am not the same as I was prior to facilitating six sessions of focus group with African-American women survivors of domestic violence experiencing the aftereffects of guilt and shame. While this model's demographics included only African-American women survivors of domestic violence, male survivors, as well as other ethnic groups, can also benefit from this model. For male survivors of domestic violence, especially, I recommend this model along with utilizing Howard Fradkin's book, *Joining Forces: Empowering Male Survivors to Thrive*. This text is particularly suited to address the specific needs of men as they emerge as victors from incidences of domestic violence. For me, ministry is, simply, service to others. Thus, as a servant, it was rewarding to meet survivors of domestic violence where they were in their degree of guilt and shame with the intentions of not leaving them like I found them.

Further, my research documents that the aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with surviving domestic violence cannot be healed in isolation. The healing requires the support of outside sources. Outside sources can vary, but this research shows that one outside source is vital to the healing process: focus group with peers.

One of the many challenges for birthing new ministries is the follow-up and continuation of that ministry. Focus group support ministry for survivors of domestic violence experiencing guilt and shame as a result of being abused was birthed out of my own experience. I strongly believe that God called me to help survivors of domestic violence to transform and thrive. Unfortunately, not all pastors have the same passion. In this project, for example, the changes in the degree of guilt and shame after completing the six sessions were evident for focus group participants. It is interesting to also note that

the focus group participants who completed the six sessions were interested in continuing sessions. The challenge in my denomination is that itinerant pastors are assigned annually. Rarely are there cases where pastors remain at a local church for an extended period of time. This hinders the continuity of the ministry. I have since been assigned to a new pastoral charge and the current pastor at Rock Star does not support focus group ministry for survivors of domestic violence. Continuation of this vital ministry will not occur until all pastors take seriously the need for the ministry and all churches come out of denial that domestic violence and its aftereffects are issues that need addressing. Additionally, I submit that church lay leaders must be empowered to realize the need for domestic violence ministry in the local church and trained to facilitate this ministry even in the wake of a new pastor, especially in itinerant churches. This would certainly be a way of ensuring continuity of the ministry.

For this project, the biggest issue amongst the participants was blaming themselves for the abuse. While this project addressed the aftereffects of guilt associated with surviving domestic violence, going forward I would have a forgiveness ritual whereby the participants can forgive themselves for legitimate issues. For example, I am aware that there are things that people are guilty of that is not related to domestic violence or surviving domestic violence. It would be important to add a ceremony on releasing guilt for the legitimate things that survivors have done that is non domestic violence related.

As a another means of fine-tuning the model, going forward I would also conduct the same stone selection ritual used in Session One again in Session Six to see if there was a change in the selection of colored stones which was indicative of how the survivors

were feeling personally at the conclusion of the sessions. Further, I recommend that the timing and intervals between focus group sessions are consistent and equal. Timing and intervals may be contributors to why focus group participants do not continue the project. There was a variation of intervals between sessions, ranging from one week to three weeks. This may have contributed to two of the participants not continuing in the focus group. Finally, I recommend that there be preaching, teaching, workshops, and a curriculum include in the Christian Education Department on guilt and shame as a means of opening the way for those suffering with the aftereffects of guilt and shame who might be in denial. By hearing sermons, lessons or participating in workshop prior to participating in focus groups, survivors may be more open to participating in focus group sessions where the real work of confronting the aftereffects of guilt and shame really occurs.

On a positive note, a resolution was enacted at our 2014 General Conference, held in Baltimore, Maryland. This resolution mandated that every local church in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church denomination establish Domestic Violence Ministry. The details of the resolution can be found at Appendix G. I served on the Committee that brought the resolution before the body of the General Conference for enactment, but I must not rest on my laurels even now that the resolution has passed. To continue in this quest, I readily offer myself and this model as a means for developing the ministry in the local church to the Bishops to support the resolution that was passed into law at the 2014 General Conference of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. After all, what will be more rewarding than anything else is when all local churches adhere to the new law and become the church that God requires.

The “No More” organization advocacy and campaign awareness, along with my personal experience, speaks to my conviction of not allowing anything to hinder me from addressing the aftereffects of guilt and shame associated with domestic violence in the local church. Working on this project confirmed the denial of pastors of the need for domestic violence ministries. As ambassadors of God, pastors must take seriously how they represent God.

As a pastor of a new charge in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, I am in the process of birthing another domestic violence focus group ministry, and I continue to be asked to provide workshops on the subject of domestic violence at other churches in other states. Most recently, I was invited by Bishop Teresa Snorton to present at the Phenomenal Women’s Conference in Birmingham, Alabama. The theme of the Conference was “Putting the Pieces Back Together,” and I facilitated a session with African American Women entitled, “Broken, Bruised and Battered: Overcoming Abuse.” In this presentation, I also shared my story and the need for the church to eradicate the silence on domestic violence. During this week long conference, a facilitator who would be presenting to the high school and college students on dating violence had an unforeseen emergency and I was asked to facilitate those two sessions, as well.

God is placing me in positions to be a voice that will cry out against the injustice of not addressing domestic violence and bring to the forefront the aftereffects of guilt and shame as a result of surviving domestic violence, while simultaneously allowing me to reiterate the role that the church must play in doing so.

The Prophet Micah offers this challenge: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and

to walk humbly with your God?”¹ This requirement (to do justice toward others) certainly takes into account doing justice to persons who are survivors of domestic violence and who, as a result, suffer the aftereffects of guilt and shame. Like the Prophet Micah, pastors (as leaders) must take on the responsibility to lead congregations into this ministry of doing justice. As God's representatives, for the love of justice we must embrace the opportunity to do justice. The church must be the church; thus, both clergy and lay must commit to loving action and courageous faith in providing support ministry for survivors of domestic violence. May all pastors, then, heed God's requirement of providing justice to survivors of domestic violence by addressing the issue of guilt and shame in the local church. After all, when all pastors believe, as I do, that engaging in this ministry *is* doing justice, that engaging in this ministry *is* what the Lord requires, then—and only then—will the pastor and churches leave an impact that is felt long after songs are sung and sermons are preached.

¹ Micah 6:8 (New Revised Standard Version)

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Definitions

Battering:

Battering is threat of or use of violence to gain power and control over a person with whom one is or has shared in an intimate partner relationship.¹

Domestic violence:

Bodily or emotional harm done to a person who shares an intimate relationship with one another. The harm can be physical, emotional, spiritual, verbal or psychological. It stems from one person trying to exhibit power and control over the other.

Guilt:

“Bearing responsibility for an offense or wrongdoing or remorseful awareness of having done something wrong.”²

Misogyny:

“a hatred of women.”³

Pericope:

“a selection from a book; *specifically* : LECTURE 1”⁴

Shame:

“the painful feeling arising from the consciousness of something dishonorable, improper, ridiculous, etc., done by oneself or another.”⁵

¹ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “The Problem,” accessed November 13, 2014, <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem.php>.

² Youngblood, 526.

³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “misogyny,” accessed November 13, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/misogyny>.

⁴ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “pericope,” accessed November 13, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pericope>.

⁵ Dictionary.com, s.v. “shame,” *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc., accessed November 13, 2014, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/shame>

APPENDIX B

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST CONTINUUM

PARTICIPANT PRE-POST TEST CONTINUUM

Guilt	Shame
☐ 10	☐ 10
☐ 9	☐ 9
☐ 8	☐ 8
☐ 7	☐ 7
☐ 6	☐ 6
☐ 5	☐ 5
☐ 4	☐ 4
☐ 3	☐ 3
☐ 2	☐ 2
☐ 1	☐ 1
☐ HEALED	☐ HEALED

Instructions

1. Each number represents a level of Guilt (left hand side) and Shame (right hand side).
2. Check the appropriate ☐ that indicates your level of Guilt (left hand side) and Shame (right hand side).
3. Below number one represent no guilt (left hand side) and/or no shame (right hand side).
4. Indicate on the scale where your cognitive emotions of guilt (left hand side) and shame (right hand side) reside at this present moment.

NAME _____ NUMBER _____

Legend

Number	Affect
Below 1	Healed
1-3	Mild
4-6	Moderate
7-10	Severe

APPENDIX C
SESSIONS FORMAT

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Session 1 Format

1. Purpose of Group
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Welcome
 - C. Purpose of Group
 - D. Disseminate Folders and Discuss Contents
2. Completion of Forms
 - A. Confidentiality Agreement
 - B. Demographic Questionnaire
 - C. Pre Test
3. Introduction of Group Members
 - A. Who are you? Introductions using the first letter of your first name and last letter of your last name to describe yourself.
 - B. How are you feeling? Utilize color stones to indicate feelings.
 - C. Why are you here? (3-4 sentences)
4. Break (Soft Music)
5. Closing

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Session 2 Format

1. Introduction of Facilitator and Group Members (10 minutes)
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Welcome
 - C. Purpose of Group
 - D. Disseminate Folders and Discuss Contents
2. Give topic of today's session (Guilt) (30 minutes)
 - A. Defining guilt
 - B. Writing in journals – Question of the day- Why do I feel guilty about the domestic violence I experienced when I did nothing wrong?
 - C. Sharing
3. Break 10 minutes (Soft music)
4. Working through the guilt I feel from the abuse I received. (20 minutes)
 - A. Examining how we misplace the blame “If I had only done or not done this or that”
 - B. Rejecting the blame and transferring it to appropriate place. Abuse is never justified.
5. Writing in journals – (20 minutes)
 - A. I acknowledge that the abuse was not my fault.
 - B. I should not feel guilt because....
 - C. In order to move forward, I need....
 - D. Sharing
6. Break (10 minutes) Soft music
7. Closing
 - A. Psalm 9:9-10 “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.”
 - B. Closing Prayer

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Session 3 Format

1. Introduction of Facilitator and Group Members (10 minutes)
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Welcome
 - C. Purpose of Group
 - D. Disseminate Folders and Discuss Contents
2. Give topic of today's session (Shame) (50 minutes)
 - A. Defining shame
 - B. Writing in journals
 1. Do you feel shamed about what happened to you?
 2. Have you ever experienced: Isolation? Felt all alone? Low Self-Esteem?
 3. Hopeless? Unworthy of love?
 4. In your experience of feeling shame, did you feel cut off from God?
3. Break 10 minutes (Soft music)
4. Activity (15 minutes)
 - A. Poem – “We Wear the Mask” by Paul Lawrence Dunbar
 - B. Mask Activity – Give each participant a mask. Allow them to participant to focus on one incident that caused them to feel ashamed. What did you see? What did you hear? How did you feel?
 - C. Sharing
5. Unmasking Shame (30 minutes)
 - A. Remove mask
 - B. Share your shame within the group setting
 - C. Write about it in your journal and get it out of you
 - D. Speak positive affirmations about yourself to yourself. Examples: I am beautiful. I am good. I am lovable. I do belong. I am capable. I am lovely. I have what it takes to succeed. There is a great purpose for my life.
6. Closing (5 minutes)
 1. Find or compose a song, dance or poem that speaks specifically to you expressing your feelings about your new self-image. Share this with someone.
 2. Closing prayer

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Session 4 Format

1. Introduction of Facilitator and Group Members (15 minutes)
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Welcome
 - C. Purpose of Group
 - D. Disseminate Folders and Discuss Contents
2. Sharing of Stories (1 ½ Hours)
3. Musical interlude in between sharing of stories (10 minutes)
4. Closing Prayer

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Session 5 Format

1. Introduction of Facilitator and Group Members (10 minutes)
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Welcome
 - C. Purpose of Group
 - D. Disseminate folders and discuss contents
2. Give topic of today's session – "Loving the You God Created: Re-evaluating Self-Esteem" (1 hour 30 minutes)
 - A. Mirror exercise 1
 - B. Discovering Your God Given Worth
 - C. What is self-esteem?
 - D. Controlling your self-talk
 - E. Mirror exercise 2
3. Break (10 minutes)
4. Closing (10 minutes)
 - A. Testimonies
 - B. Recital of Poem, "Our Deepest Fear"
 - C. Prayer

Our Deepest Fear, by President Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Speech

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Session 6 Format

1. Introduction of Facilitator and Group Members (10 minutes)
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Welcome
2. Post-test
3. Evaluation of Sessions
4. Testimonies
5. Mary Kay Facials
6. Thank You to Participants
7. Closing Prayer

APPENDIX D
SESSION EVALUATION

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Sessions Evaluation

1. Were these sessions beneficial to you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Explain _____

2. What was the strength of the sessions? _____

3. What was the weakness of the sessions? _____

4. Were the presenters knowledgeable of the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Would you be willing to participate continuously in a peer focus group in the local church? ☐ Yes ☐ No Why or why not? _____

6. Additional comments _____

APPENDIX E
DEMOGRAPHICS INFORMATION

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Demographic Questions

Name _____ Number _____

Check the appropriate answer to each question

What is your age group?

- ☐ 18-35
- ☐ 36-46
- ☐ 47-57
- ☐ 58+

Are you currently?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

Do you have any children? If so, how many?

- ☐ Yes Number of children _____
- ☐ No

Employment Status

- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Part-time
- ☐ Full-time

Highest Level of Education

- ☐ High School
- ☐ GED
- ☐ Associate Degree
- ☐ College Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate Degree

APPENDIX F

POST CARD

Figure 1. Postcard



March 22, 2014
 March 29, 2014
 April 19, 2014
 May 3, 2014
 May 17, 2014
 May 24, 2014

FOR THE LOVE OF JUSTICE
 Be a part of a FEMALE support group
 Seek INNER Healing and gain NEW
 POSITIVE self images about ourselves

HOLSEY CHAPEL CME
 CHURCH
 Call (229)423-7785

FREE **FREE** **FREE**

LET THE HEALING BEGIN

SIX SESSIONS
 Conquer the emotions of guilt and shame associated with
 domestic violence through storytelling in peer group settings.

LIMITED SEATING **REGISTER EARLY**

APPENDIX G
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

FOR LOVE OF JUSTICE: EXPLORATION OF GUILT AND SHAME
ASSOCIATED WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, do thereby promise that I will
Print Name

not discuss anything that is shared in this focus group with anyone else. All information
provided in this focus group will be held in confidence by me. Information disclosed
during these sessions is not to be disclosed or shared with anyone. Everything shared
within the confines of this focus group will remain in this group.

Print Name

Signature

Date

APPENDIX H

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Resolution to Address Domestic Violence in the Local Church

WHEREAS one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime and an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year of which 85% of domestic violence victims are women. Females who are **20-24 years of age** are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence. Most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police (*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*) and;

WHEREAS Every nine seconds in the United States a woman is assaulted or beaten (US Department of Justice); and witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. Boys who witness domestic violence are *twice as likely* to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults. 30% to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household (*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*) and;

WHEREAS Church membership and/or Church Congregants are not exempt from these statistics.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

Each Local Church shall establish a Domestic Violence Ministry; and/or partner with a local Domestic Violence Shelter/Program in order to create awareness, education, direct services, prevention and crisis intervention programs with a focus on helping to address the needs of those individuals and families who are victims or survivors of domestic violence within their Local Church.

That pastors, ministers and laity will work with victims, survivors and perpetrators to address the many complex issues associated with domestic violence in an effort to end the cycle of abuse by referring them to the appropriate Domestic Violence / Batterer Intervention Program.

That pastors and ministers will speak out and send a message that domestic violence is unacceptable under any circumstances and is contrary to biblical teachings. As such, they shall offer hope, healing, patience and understanding.

That the church shall participate in and/or sponsor Domestic Violence Awareness Month activities in October of each year (*National Domestic Violence Awareness Month*) and develop benevolence outreach opportunities for the cause of domestic violence.

Submitted by:

Mrs. Doretha A. Christian, Kirkwood Temple CME Church, Dallas Fort Worth Region,
8th Episcopal District

Rev. David C. Isom, Pastor, St. Stephen CME Church, Northern California Region,
9th Episcopal District
Director of Faith Partners Against Family Violence – Associated Ministries

Mrs. Billye McNeil, Christian Chapel Temple of Faith CME Church, Dallas Fort Worth
Region,
8th Episcopal District

Dr. Evelyn Parker, Kirkwood Temple CME Church, Dallas Fort Worth Region,
8th Episcopal District
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Practical Theology, Perkins
School of Theology, Southern Methodist University

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ali-Dinar, Ali. "Letter from the Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]" African Studies Center University of Pennsylvania. December 30, 2013. Accessed December 30, 2013. http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.
- Almasy, Steve. "Two Teens Found Guilty in Steubenville Rape Case," *CNN Justice*, March 17, 2013. Accessed May 17, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/03/17/justice/ohio-steubenville-case/index.html>.
- Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Reissue ed. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2009.
- Angelou, Maya. *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*. Reissue ed. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1994.
- Bailey, Patricia D. *Women Risktakers: It's Your Destiny- Reach Higher, Stand Stronger, Go Further*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2004.
- Bancroft, Lundy. *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*. New York, NY: Berkley Books, 2002.
- Billingsley, Andrew. *Mighty Like a River: the Black Church and Social Reform*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Blackmon, Janice D. *Awakening Sleeping Beauty: How Victims of Sexual Abuse Can Reclaim Their Birthright of Wholeness*. Xulon Press, 2011.
- Bradley, Diane. "The Beginning of Domestic Violence" Air Force Print News Today (October 2007). Accessed May 23, 2013. http://www.dyess.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?if=123070712.
- Bradshaw, John. *Healing the Shame That Binds You*. Expanded ed. Deerfield Beach, FL: HCI, 2005.
- Braxton, Brad Ronnell. *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience*. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 2002.

- Brown, Joanne Carlson and Rebecca Parker. "For God So Loved the World?," in *Violence Against Women and Children*, ed. Carol Adams and Marie Fortune. New York: Continuum, 1998.
- Buxton, Rod. "Domestic violence in the church: "there is an elephant in the sanctuary and no-one is talking about it." the results of a Manitoba survey." *Didaskalia (Otterburne, Man.)* 12, no. 1:51-75. Accessed May 2, 2014. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.
- Carter, Jimmy. *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014.
- Clark, Ron. *Freeing the Oppressed*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.
- Clark, Ron. *Setting the Captives Free: A Christian Theology for Domestic Violence*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005.
- Colbert, Ty C. *Why Do I Feel Guilty When I've Done Nothing Wrong?* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1993.
- Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. 40th ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010.
- Cone, James H. *Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Cone, James H. *For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church*. 13th edition Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.
- Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Rev. ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011.
- Coogan, Michael D., ed. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Cooper-White, Pamela. *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response*. 2 ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012.
- Craddock, Fred B. *Interpretation Luke, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990.
- Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.

- Davis, Edward Smith. "Ethical and Biblical Engagement for Social and Moral Imperatives: The Trials and Joys, the Ins and Outs of Being A Conference Minister with its Diversity." Lecture, Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ Headquarters, Burlington, NC, December 9, 2014.
- Davis, Sharon Ellis. *Battered African American Women: A Study of Gender Entrapment*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellin Press, 2014.
- Davison, Lisa Wilson. *Preaching the Women of the Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006.
- DeConick, April D. *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter*. New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.
- Deen, Edith. *All of the Women of the Bible*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Dobash, R. Emerald, and Russell P. Dobash. *Women, Violence, & Social Change*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.
- Dockery, D. S., T. C. Butler, C. L. Church. L. L. Scott, M. A. Ellis-Smith and J.E. White. *Holman Bible Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992.
- Dugan, Meg Kennedy & Roger R Hock, *It's My Life Now: Starting Over After an Abusive Relationship or Domestic Violence*, 2nd ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.
- Evans, Adrian C. *Loving the You God Created: Re-evaluating Self-Esteem*. Mobile, AL, 2014.
- Exum, J. Cheryl. *Plotted, Shot and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women*. Sheffield, South Yorkshire: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Fable, Jan. "Shame." Forhealing.org. December 29, 2013. Accessed December 29, 2013. <http://www.forhealing.org/shame.html>.
- Fluker, Walter Earl. 2014. Black History Lecture, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL. February 17, 2014.
- Fortune, Marie. "Getting It Right? Part 2: Keep Trying." *Marie's Blog. Faith Trust Institute*, September 24, 2014. Accessed September 28, 2014. <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/blog>.
- Fortune, Marie M. *Is Nothing Sacred? The Story of a Pastor, the Women He Sexually Abused, and the Congregation He Nearly Destroyed*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publication, 2008.

- Fradkin, Howard. *Joining Forces: Empowering Male Survivors to Thrive*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2012.
- Frederick, Marla F. *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003.
- Georgia Encyclopedia, Ben Hill County, Georgia, accessed October 22, 2014, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/counties/ben-hill>.
- Gilkes, Cheryl Townsend. *If It Wasn't for the Women* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 209.
- Grant, Jacquelyn. *White Women's Christ and Black Woman's Jesus*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989.
- Grant, Jacquelyn "Womanist Theology in North America." *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 16, no. 1-2 (Fall-Spring 1988-1989), 285.
- Gunn, D. and D. N. Fewell. *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Edited by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.
- Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*. New York, NY: Crown Business, 2013.
- Hildebrand, Mary Anne. "Domestic violence: a challenge to Mennonite faith and peace theology." In Conrad Grebel Review 10, no. 1 (December 1, 1992): 73-80. Accessed September 11, 2014. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.
- Hollies, Linda H. *Inner Healing for Broken Vessels: A Domestic Violence Survival Guide*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2006.
- Hooks, Bell. *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005.
- Justes, Emma J. *Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014.
- Kaufman, Gershen. *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame Based Syndromes*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, 1996.

- Ki-moon, General Ban. "How Widespread is Violence Against Women," Unite to End Violence Against Women, United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI/2498, (February 2008) Accessed May 23, 2013. <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf>.
- Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. *Misbegotten Anguish: a Theology and Ethics of Violence*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001.
- Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. *Violence and Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006
- Knowles, Andrew. *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2001.
- MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Commentary: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005.
- Mari McCaig, and Edward S. Kubany. *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: a Workbook for Women (new Harbinger Self-Help Workbook)*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2004.
- McClory, Robert. *Radical Disciple: Father Pfleger, St. Sabina Church, and the Fight for Social Justice*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2010.
- McCrary, Carolyn Akua L. *Intimate Violence Against Black Women and Internalized Shame: A Womanist Pastoral Counseling Perspective*. Spring, 2001.
- McIntyre, Lavonia K. *Scratching the Stained Glass Ceiling: Inspiring Women through the Voices of Other Women*. Interdenominational Theological Center Dissertation 2013.
- McKenzie, Vashti M. *Journey to the Well (Compass)*. Reprint ed. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Miles, Al. *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "Domestic Violence is Not Only an NFL Issue." Accessed September 11, 2014. <http://www.ncadv.org/>.
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "The Problem." Accessed November 13, 2014. <http://www.ncadv.org/learn/TheProblem.php>.
- Newman, Susan. *Your Inner Eve: Discovering God's Woman Within*. New York, NY: One World/Ballantine, 2005.

- Nolland, John. *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 35a, Luke 1:1-9:20*. Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1989.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Making All Things New: an Invitation to the Spiritual Life*. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2009.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. New York, NY: Image Books, 1979.
- Paramore, Bishop Kenneth W. "Blurred Vision." Sermon, Mark 8:22-26, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, August 19, 2014.
- Park, Andrew Sung. *From Hurt to Healing: a Theology of the Wounded*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Park, Andrew Sung. *Triune Atonement: Christ's Healing for Sinners, Victims, and the Whole Creation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.
- Poling, Nancy Werking, ed. *Victim to Survivor: Women Recovering from Clergy Sexual Abuse*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009.
- Potter-Efron, Ronald, and Patricia Potter-Efron. *Letting Go of Shame: Understanding How Shame Affects Your Life*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1989.
- Reddick III, Lawrence L. *The Book of Discipline of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*. Memphis, TN: The CME Publishing House, 2010.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology: with a New Introduction*. 10th ed. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.
- Roberts, Alexander, DD and James Donaldson, LL.D., eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1 Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.
- Schulte, Leah Rediger and Tammi J. Schneider. "The Absence of the Deity in Rape Scenes of the Hebrew Bible," in, *The Presence and Absence of God: Claremont Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, Conference 2008*. Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, Germany, 2009.
- Seamands, David A. *Healing for Damaged Emotions (David Seamands Series)*. New ed. Wheaton, IL: David C. Cook, 1991.
- Sheen, Tom. "Domestic Violence in the NFL." *U S Sport*, September 18, 2014. Accessed September 28, 2014. <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/us-sport/national-football-league/domestic-violence-in-the-nfl-four-players-are-currently-suspended-but-11-more-with-previous-charges-will-be-able-to-play-this-weekend-9740949.html>.

- Smith, Edward. *The Doctrines of Providence and Revelation: An Introduction to Philosophy and Theology*; The Public Theology Edition. Atlanta, GA: The Research Press Center, 2001.
- Smith, Penny R. *The Second Woman Bible Study: Healing from Intimate Partner Violence and Post-Abortion Grief*. Bloomington, IN: Crossbooks, 2013.
- Speaking of Faith: Domestic Violence Programs and The African American Church*. DVD. Directed by Dr. Oliver J. Williams. St. Paul, MN: Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, 2011.
- Spragin, Jr., Ore Lee. *Commentary On the Gospel of Luke*. n/p: CreateSpaceIndependent Publishing Platform, 2011.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *The Woman's Bible: a Classic Feminist Perspective*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003.
- Stevenson-Moessner, Jeanne, Teresa Snorton, and editors. *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Stinson-Wesley, S. Amelia. "Daughters of Tamar: Pastoral Care for Survivors of Rape," in *Through the Eyes of Women*. Edited by Jeanne Stevenson Moessner. 222-239. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.
- Suburban Stats, Fitzgerald, Georgia. Population, Demographics and Stats. Accessed October 22, 2014. <http://suburbanstats.org/population/Georgia/how-many-people-live-in-fitzgerald>.
- Tatum, Scott L. "2 Samuel" in *The Teacher's Bible Commentary*. ed. Paschall, Franklin H. and Herschel H. Hobbs. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972.
- "The Abuse of Women – A Worldwide Issue – American Traditions," *The Library Index* Accessed May 23, 2013. <http://www.libraryindex.com/pages/2031/Abuse-Women-Worldwide-Issues-American-Traditions/>.
- The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Resolution Concerning Establishing Domestic Violence Ministry in the Local Churches, (meeting in Baltimore, MD, June 27-July 4, 2014. Adopted Resolution 2014-05-099.
- The Mary Kay Foundation. "The Mary Kay Foundation: A Legacy of Love." Accessed November 22, 2014. <http://www.marykayfoundation.org/Pages/AboutUs.aspx>.

- Thurman, Howard. *Deep Is the Hunger: Meditations for Apostles of Sensitiveness*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1978.
- Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Thurman, Howard. *The Creative Encounter: an Interpretation of Religion and the Social Witness*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1972.
- Townes, Emilie M. *Breaking the Fine Rain of Death: African American Health Issues and a Womanist Ethic of Care*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2001.
- Tracey, Steven R. "Clergy Responses to Domestic Violence," *Mending the Soul* (blog), April 2007. Accessed May 18, 2013.
<http://www.mendingthesoul.org/2007/04/clergy-responses-to-domestic-violence/>.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narrative*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984.
- United States Census Bureau. State and County Quick Facts. Fitzgerald, Georgia. Accessed January 3, 2014.
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/1329528.html>.
- Walker, Crystal. "Silence Is No Longer an Option: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence." Dissertation, United Theological Seminary, 2014.
- Wallis, Jim. "It's Time for Outrage: Sexual Violence and the Church." *Sojourners*, 05-16-2013. Accessed September 12, 2014. <http://sojo.net/>.
- Warren, Rick. "Daily Hope with Rick Warren," September 12, 2014 [3:34 AM (GMT-06:00)]. Accessed September 12, 2014.
Connect@newsletter.purposedriven.com(accessed September 12, 2014)..
- Weems, Renita J. *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophet*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Weems, Renita J. *Just a Sister Away: a Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible*. San Diego, CA: Publishing/Editing Network, 1988.
- Weiss, Elaine. *Surviving Domestic Violence: Voices of Women Who Broke Free*. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 2004.
- Welch, Edward T. *Shame Interrupted*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2012.
- Williams, Delores. *Sisters in the Wilderness*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Wimberly, Anne E. Streaty. *Soul Stories*. rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Wimberly, Edward P. *African American Pastoral Care*. rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008.

Wimberly, Edward P. *Claiming God: Reclaiming Dignity--African American Pastoral Care*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.

Wimberly, Edward P. *Relational Refugees: Alienation and Reincorporation in African American Churches and Communities*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Woodiwiss, Catherine Woodiwiss. "‘I Believe You:’ The Silence and the Shame of Sexual Violence in Church," *God’s Politics Blog Sojourners*, entry posted May 3, 2013. Accessed May 17, 2013. <http://sojo.net/blogs/2013/05/03/i-believe-you-silence-and-shame-sexual-violence-church.html>.

Youngblood, Robert F. ed. *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

Youngman, Jenny. "Dealing with Domestic Violence." October 22, 2011. Accessed September 20, 2014. <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/article/entry/1941/dealing-with-domestic-violence>.